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PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE

CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

BY

THE EDITORS OF "THE ANDOVER REVIEW"

PROFESSORS IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

. . . Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of
the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man,
unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.
— EPH. iv. 13.



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THE papers collected in this volume appeared first as editorial contributions to "The Andover Review," a religious and theological monthly conducted by EGBERT C. SMYTH, WILLIAM J. TUCKER, J. W. CHURCHILL, GEORGE HARRIS, and EDWARD Y. HINCKS, Professors in Andover Theological Seminary. They are republished substantially as first issued, with the exception of the first and seventh articles, portions of which only had previously appeared. Some account of the purpose and method of the series is given in the introductory article.

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PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY.



I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE phrase "New Theology" is applied largely and loosely to a great variety of opinions advocated quite independently by numerous writers in many countries. In its widest inclusion it embraces tendencies which are more or less contradictory to Apostolic Christianity and to the general tradition and faith of the Church. In its more correct and reasonable use it covers many movements of thought which are quite distinct, one from the other, and are not likely immediately to coalesce or harmonize. Even where there is greater affinity of conception there is diversity in the field which is cultivated. One class of writers busies itself chiefly with the dogmatic problems necessitated by the growth of the evolutionary Philosophy. Another is occupied with questions of historical Criticism. Another is absorbed in the development of the new science of Biblical Theology. Another seeks from a yet more interior and central position to state the leading doctrines of our religion in the light and under the

inspiration of the revelation of God which is given in Christ. Perhaps the stamp which marks most distinctly and comprehensively this new Divinity is reality; and the phrase "real Theology" is in this and other respects a better designation than "new Theology." It is real because it deals with beings more than with abstractions, with actual processes and their rational contents more than with *a priori* assumptions, with laws of life and organic forces more than with mechanical combinations, with wholes or parts in their relations to wholes, with things more than with words, and with persons more than with things. Wherever an investigator in the wide domain of knowledge is seeking for and touching reality he is contributing to this Theology; and there is consequently a strong bond of sympathy between all such workers, even though the limitation of their labor and the narrowness of human vision may hold them apart.

The following essays are offered as such a contribution. Their special themes and the mode of treatment have been determined by current discussions. They make no attempt to formulate the "New Theology," or to indicate its scope. Such an endeavor might be too ambitious; it would doubtless be premature. Along with a general unity of spirit and aim on the part of the advocates of the "New Theology" there exists, as we have intimated, a noticeable variety of special opinions and judgments. Not all of these can be harmonized. Not all will be able to vindicate their character as purely Chris-

tian. Some are professedly advanced as provisional, hypothetic, tentative. Problems are above the horizon which are not yet clearly within the field of vision. Even their provisional and relative solution is at present impracticable. Too early an attempt to define and systematize is likely to cramp and repress inquiry, and to promote a dogmatic self-satisfaction which is a deadly foe to progress. The aim, accordingly, of the writers of these papers has been to keep clearly within the range of what is immediately necessary and practical. For the most part, a single line of inquiry has been followed, under the guidance of a central and vital principle of Christianity, namely, the reality of Christ's personal relation to the human race as a whole and to every member of it, — the principle of the universality of Christianity.

This principle has been rapidly gaining of late in its power over men's thoughts and lives. It is involved in the church doctrine of the constitution of Christ's person. It is a necessary implication of our fathers' faith in the extent and intent of the Atonement. It is an indisputable teaching of sacred Scripture. It lies at the heart of all that is most heroic and self-sacrificing in the Christian life of our century. We have sought to apply this principle to the solution of questions which are now more than ever before engaging the attention of serious and devout minds. We have endeavored to follow its guidance faithfully and loyally, and whithersoever it might lead. We have trusted it wholly

and practically. By the publication of this volume we submit our work to the judgment of a wider public. If we have anywhere overestimated or underestimated the validity and value of our guiding principle, we hope that this will be pointed out. Or if we have lost sight of any qualifying or limiting truth, we desire that this may be shown. On the other hand, if we have been true to a great and cardinal doctrine of our holy religion, and have developed its necessary implications and consequences, we ask that any further discussion of these conclusions should *recognize their connection with the principle from which they are derived, and their legitimacy, unless this principle is itself to be abandoned.*

A subordinate aim of the following essays is to point out, as the occasion arises, certain theological improvements which we regard as already assured. Leaving general phrases which may easily be made to hold either too much or too little, we would turn attention to a few fundamental doctrines, and show in what respect there actually is improvement in their apprehension and use. The task is not an easy one. But no important work is, and it seems to us to be timely and to promise good. There has been a great change in the public mind, especially that to which we are most immediately related, even within a brief period. The number of persons who desire information as to what the "New Theology" can offer is increased. Prejudices have been overcome. Not a few friends of progress, if we are not mistaken, who once were distrustful of

this Theology, have already discovered that it has something in it desirable and helpful for them; and that even if some of its positions and inferences are insecure, yet, taken as a whole, it is a real and salutary advance in Christian thought. Such persons will welcome our endeavor, and will deal kindly with its imperfections. We cannot but hope that others, at present more critical in their attitude, possibly pronounced in their opposition, may see reason for a less unfavorable judgment; may even discover that the new movement really signifies a better apprehension of the truth and a larger use of the power of the gospel which they and we alike have received in faith and as a sacred trust. So far, therefore, as the new thought in theology commends itself to us as a real and definite gain, and so far as it naturally comes under review in prosecuting the special purpose of this volume, we shall endeavor to set it forth, and to indicate in what respects it is differentiated from the old.

We have retained the general title — “*Progressive Orthodoxy*” — under which these papers first appeared. The word “*orthodoxy*” was employed as a concise and convenient expression of our conviction that theological progress does not involve or require any break with the faith of the church catholic, any recasting of the primitive ecumenical creeds, any departure from the fundamental principles of the Reformation. We have no special regard for the epithet *orthodox*. It has been sufficiently abused to give ground for offense. It

suggests to some minds narrowness, arrogance, and intolerance. We much prefer to be recognized as disciples of Him who is the Truth than to be credited with conformity to standards of belief of human construction. But we are not insensible to the reality and worth of character in the sphere of thought. Human progress would be impossible if everything in belief were changeable. No man could hope for moral perfection if in the power of choice itself there were not the possibility of a permanent preference, or if liberty were not exercised in a system of things which makes for stability. The word orthodox designates theological character, recognizes constant as well as variable elements in religious belief, discriminates the position and work of those who are entitled to appropriate it from the revolutionary aim of men who deny the historical basis of Christianity, or resolve its doctrines into what are called the eternal truths of the spirit, or substitute for the divine Spirit the human reason, and are unable to save themselves from the method and consequences of rationalism. The present is rooted in the past. Christianity has a permanent basis in historical facts, in a faith once for all delivered to the saints, in a Canon of sacred Scripture. There is a collective and continuous Christian consciousness. Our recognition of this relation of the new to the old is expressed in our motto, "Progressive Orthodoxy." To be more definite, it emphasizes our belief that the positions to which we have assented, the conclusions we have adopted,

are in the line of that development of Christian doctrine which has been advancing in the church from the beginning. First of all, the church settled its rule of faith, confessing the fundamental historic facts of the gospel, discriminating its authoritative Scriptures, affirming against Ebionism and Gnosticism the distinctness, universality, and absoluteness of Christianity. Impelled by the inward necessities of its own life, as well as constrained by outward oppositions, it proceeded to affirm yet more clearly and fully its central Principle. Everything in Christianity centres in Christ. For more than a century after the church became fully conscious of the distinctness of its mission and of its catholicity, its thought was chiefly turned to the doctrine of the second Person named in its baptismal formula and Apostles' Creed. Then followed a similar, though less protracted, concentration of interest upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; then a like, though still more restricted, absorption in the question of the relation of divine grace to human depravity. In this way results were reached which have stood the test of time, and are a part of the belief to-day of the universal church. It is through the same process of inquiry, reflection, comparison of opinions, growth of belief under the demands of successive periods in human history, disclosures of Providence, and promptings of the Holy Spirit, that more and more fully the Christian revelation has been translated into creed and life. Progress in theology is a progress in

method, and then a progress in result. It may be intensive when not extensive, qualitative when not quantitative. It is at times a matter of accent and emphasis more than of additional information and improved statement, of interpretation rather than of new data, of combination and proportion as well as of increased knowledge, of new order and not simply of new materials. There is no doctrine of the Bible, however rudimentary and essential, which is not susceptible of illumination or higher systemization in the development of a scientific faith; and there may be an endless advance in the larger inclusion and better correlation of known spiritual facts and truths, for these are intrinsically, not simple units, or measurable quantities, or tangible things, but revelations of the highest and grandest personal qualities and actions, and of the vastest relations and destinies. The church has always proclaimed that "God is love," but there can be no question that in thought and life this truth has a far more commanding influence to-day than ever before. Christian faith has always accepted the fact of the Incarnation, but it cannot be doubted that enlarged conceptions of the contents of this fact have been gained through centuries of earnest discussion and even bitter controversy, or that it is now more amply interpreted than was possible to earlier thought. Nor do we exhaust the meaning of progress by conceiving of it as merely formal, or intensive, or qualitative. There is material enlargement. The church of to-day has a fuller

knowledge of the purpose of God respecting the extension of Christianity, a better conception of the dispensation of the Spirit and of the relation of Christianity to human history, than it was possible to communicate to the early church. The fulfillments of prophecy yield an ampler knowledge than could be derived immediately from the original record. Events are God's messengers; providences are his interpreters; the Christian centuries are the promised times of the Spirit, and unfold divine purposes. Something new is revealed in the growth of the Christian church, as indeed in all development. To deny such progressive unfolding of the Christian verities is to ignore or to falsify history. It has been actually going on from the beginning. It is rooted in the necessary laws and established conditions of human thought. It is a witness to the living relation which the Head of the church sustains to it. It is the product of the presence and energy within the church of the promised Spirit of truth. To doubt that a progress thus provided for, pledged, and realized is possible also in our own time is a symptom of unbelief, not the sign of a Christian's faith.

The injunction, however, doubtless still holds good: "Prove all things." There may be novelty of doctrine without progress, as well as progress without entire novelty. The question is always legitimate and necessary whether any alleged improvement is a real advance. So far as in the following essays we have recognized progress it has

been under the full and constant acceptance of the supreme authority of sacred Scripture. Whatever new light may break forth, it will come from this source, as the church is led by the Providence and Spirit of God to a better understanding of its teachings. We have no reason to anticipate that there will be opened to theology any absolutely new doctrine, or to practical piety any other way of salvation than that revealed in the beginning. If, in the ensuing pages, opinions are expressed which can be shown not to harmonize with the voice of Scripture, or with the religious life that the Word of God instrumentally produces and sustains, they are thereby judged and condemned. We advocate them because we believe them to be Biblical and Christian. We use both of these adjectives because they seem to be necessary. It appears sometimes to be overlooked that an opinion may be Christian which cannot be grounded in, or fortified by, an array of proof-texts. The Bible, it should be remembered, is not a collection of texts designed to establish propositions in systematic theology. It is written after another method, for a different purpose. It presents persons, events, principles, warnings and promises, precepts, and examples. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." The systemization of Christian doctrine proceeds under the laws of thought. Infer-

ences must be regulated by the nature and scope of the premises. A great historical fact, a union of the ideal and the real, like the Incarnation, radiates light upon all the problems of human history and destiny. Reason, illumined by it, may trust it and use it, and not be misled, even though it cannot quote an explicit utterance of an Apostle for all that it discerns. Or, if this be thought to be too bold an assumption, this much must be admitted: Christianity is revealed as the universal and final religion for mankind. Whatever is legitimately and necessarily involved in this premise has the authority of Scripture which attests this religion, even though it be not a matter of direct and explicit Biblical assertion. The Scriptures teach, as we have just said, the principle of the universality of Christianity, but the humblest disciple of Jesus can to-day draw inferences as to the meaning of this doctrine, as to its verification in the progress and prospects of Christian missions, that exceed anything explicitly declared in the Apostolic preaching or writings. On a variety of themes conclusions are drawn and generally accepted in the Christian church from the revealed character of God, from the character and spirit of Jesus's teaching, from the character of his religion, which are wider or more specific than can be proved by any particular inspired utterance. Such inferences are current and accredited respecting the salvation of infants, the obligation of the Lord's day, the doctrine of the Trinity, the extension and

triumph of the Christian church, the nature of the Atonement. The light of the gospel as a revelation of God, the light of Christianity concentrated in the Person and work of Christ, not only shines back upon ancient Scripture, giving it new meaning, not only irradiates Apostolic preaching and prophecy, but also streams along the track of the Christian centuries, interpreting their significance, and onward into the unseen universe, whose heaven is the presence of Christ and all whose worlds are under his sway. Single proof-texts or collected proof-texts are not a measure of Christianity, nor of our knowledge of Christianity. The greatness of Christ is reflected in history, as well as in Apostolic teaching; in the fulfillments of prophecy, as well as in the comparatively indistinct letter of the original prediction; in the advance of the church in an appropriation of the spirit of his teaching; in its growing power to think after Him his thoughts and to be inspired by his love; in the long succession of centuries which require new interpretations of the meaning of his second coming; in the evolution of the economy of the Holy Spirit whom He sends, and whose work is conditioned by his Person, sacrifice, and reign. All these things put the church now in a relation to his religion which never before has been paralleled. The facts revealed in the Scriptures speak with new tongues. We do not honor Scripture less, but more, when we trust these facts, and God's interpretations of them in reason and history. They are life; the human

mind feels their vivifying power in the world of thought and theology, and cannot be held back from larger conceptions of God and his kingdom and human destiny, because everything it cherishes in hope and expectation was not definitely uttered by an Apostle in writing a practical letter to the Romans, or the Corinthians, or the *Diaspora*. Theology is the science of God. God is revealed in Christ. The possibility, the unity, the verification, of a science of divinity are given in Him. The ultimate test of progress, therefore, is Christological. The point always to be determined with reference to any alleged improvement is whether it promotes the knowledge of the central principle of Christianity in itself or in its operations.

We suppose that it is a sense of the truth of this criterion which underlies the frequent representation made by the opponents of the "New Theology" that their own systems are Christocentric. It is implied that if they were not so the claim of this Theology to be a real advance would be justified. We gladly recognize the full measure of truth which resides in such claims. The tendency of Christian thought has for long been in the direction of such a method of theological construction. One of the most marked characteristics of modern theology, as compared with either the mediæval or ancient, is the development given to the doctrine of the Atonement. This movement culminated in the "New England Theology." The doctrine of divine sovereignty had still a formal ascendancy, but this sovereignty

was thought of as sovereign grace, and as administered on the basis of a universal atonement. This is an important approach to a Christocentric system. The work of Christ is exalted to a position of dignity and power never before so adequately and scientifically represented. Yet this system with all its excellences is still far from being Christocentric. Its doctrine of God and of his purposes is not yet thoroughly christianized, but contains unassimilated deistic and pagan elements. Its theory of the Atonement subordinates the Person of Christ to his work. Its anthropology is individualistic, and is not ruled by the thought of divine sonship. Its eschatology, with special merits, is a receptacle of many imperfections and misconceptions which have crept into previous parts of the system. The whole of it, as Dr. Henry B. Smith has said, needs to be Christologized. A truly Christocentric system will be won when, and not until, the Person of Christ rather than his work is made central in redemption, and is seen at the same time to be central also in creation, revelation, and the universal kingdom of God. For such a theology is not a mere pietistic eulogy of the historic Christ, nor even a profound apprehension of some one or more of his offices or acts alone, but a systemization of religious doctrine through the knowledge of God, and especially the knowledge of God's ethical nature, communicated by Him who is the beginning and end of all divine revelations. And when once this fundamental conception of the nature and method

of theology is really gained it will be discerned with equal clearness and necessity that the true and ultimate test of all theological progress is its christianization of its materials, from whatsoever source they may be derived.

With reference to several of the topics considered by us, it should be borne in mind that as distinct, specific, and absorbing questions of theological discussion they belong to the modern era; one of them is but just beginning to attract the attention it deserves. Each and all, indeed, have from early times received more or less notice. Certain elements or factors of each have been made prominent. But none have been discussed as now, or within a comparatively brief period. The question, What is the Bible? could not earlier be investigated as in recent days, for lack, apart from other reasons, of the requisite critical apparatus. The doctrine of the Atonement even in so late a Confession as the Westminster — the last of the great historic creeds — is merged in the larger doctrine of Redemption. Many questions in eschatology, now rife, have never until recently received thorough consideration. The special inquiry as to the relation of Christ's Person, sacrifice, final judgment, to those who never hear the gospel in this life is becoming more and more urgent and important, *because it is the next and necessary one* now that the Atonement has become a distinct and specific doctrine, and the interpretation has won general approval that it has an absolutely universal relation and intent. We

claim in that portion of our work which will naturally attract the most criticism to be pursuing the path opened by our predecessors in vindicating the now accepted truth that Christ's sacrifice on Calvary was for every man. It is a reasonable request that this connection and relation of what we have to say on eschatology should be kept in view, and that the conclusions reached should be tested by their harmony with the revelation given in and through the Incarnation. The ultimate question between conflicting opinions must be, Which most perfectly appropriates the grace and truth revealed in Christ? We do not decline the test of orthodoxy, but it is obvious that, with reference to inquiries which could not arise at an earlier stage of Christian knowledge or doctrinal development, and which have never been adjudicated upon ecclesiastically because never fully opened for discussion, the question of orthodoxy happily merges in the more profitable question of truth.

We add a single remark upon the general philosophical conception of God and his relation to the universe which underlies these essays. It is a modification of a prevailing Latin conception of the divine transcendence by a clearer and fuller appreciation (in accordance with the highest thought of the Greek fathers) of the divine immanence. Such a doctrine of God, we believe, is more and more approving itself in the best philosophy of our time, and the fact of the Incarnation commends it to the acceptance of the Christian theologian.

II.

THE INCARNATION.

THE new or more developed thought respecting the Incarnation which we would now consider relates to the uniqueness of Jesus's humanity, the unity of his Person, and its significance.

I. The uniqueness of Jesus's humanity. The church has from the beginning maintained the reality of this humanity. The opposition which it has encountered has fastened successively upon its various elements. First it was denied that Jesus's body was real; then that He possessed a soul; then that his spirit or higher reason was homogeneous with ours; then that He had a human will. Each negation was at once confronted with an explicit affirmation, so that no article of our faith has been more analytically and fully confessed. In modern times the cultivation of history and improved methods of Biblical interpretation have greatly increased the degree of attention given to this subject. The "New Theology" appropriates the fruits of these investigations. It seeks in every way to attain to a just historic appreciation of the actual life in Palestine of the Man of Nazareth, and to give a truthful representation of his personal

relations to his times and to the course of history. For this purpose it enters fearlessly and fully into the most critical and thorough examination of the proper sources of evidence. But it comes out from such an investigation with a clear, positive conviction that, regarded as a man, Jesus is not only like other men, but also different from other men; that his unlikeness is an aspect of the truth or reality of his perfect manhood, and the ground of his universal human helpfulness, especially of his ability to enable men each to fulfill the idea and purpose of his own personality. This development of the doctrine of our Lord's humanity is a characteristic and most important advance of modern theology, and we will therefore dwell upon it long enough to make evident its import.

1. The uniqueness of Jesus's humanity appears in its universality. Every other man finds a limitation of his nature more or less positive, more or less influential, in his peculiar temperament. Though ordinarily not determinative, at least as respects the higher forms of the mind's action, it is always a modifying and differentiating power. Somewhat higher than individualizing forces of this sort are those innate mental tendencies and aptitudes which prompt or facilitate different kinds of labor. Each man finds it easier to work in certain directions or ways than in others. And then there is an endless variety of personal force and character secured through the proportion of powers which creative wisdom allots. An accomplished critic has pointed

out, if memory serves us, that Plato, Milton, Edwards, Napoleon, John Howard, each possessed in a conspicuous degree the gift of imagination, and that it was the modification of this common endowment by other gifts with which it was associated that made one a speculative philosopher, another a poet, another a theologian, another a soldier, another a philanthropist. And thus it comes about that no one person is absolutely like or can adequately represent any other person. This peculiarity which distinguishes one man from another and from every other we call his individuality. It fits him for his place and calling. It is his distinction. But it is also his limitation.

The uniqueness of Christ's humanity appears in this, that it was not thus circumscribed. He was an individual man, but his individuality is his universality. He was "*the Son of Man.*"¹ That which distinguishes Him from all other men is that He represents them all. His separation from any one of us is that which brings Him near to every one of us. His peculiarity is that no man's nature is so peculiar that He cannot comprehend it. He has kinship with us all by being our common Head. His benevolence embraced all men of every race, age, and clime. Whosoever does his will is his mother, sister, brother. His words are not those of any school of thought. His death was for every man. The record, "in all points tempted

¹ On the significance of this title see note by Dr. Westcott in *Speaker's Commentary*, ii. 33-35.

like as we are," is as true for one reader as for another. A life so comprehensive and complete requires as its basis and prerequisite a nature equally universal. And in this — its recognized and evident universality — Christ's human nature is without a counterpart.

2. The uniqueness of his humanity is further manifest from its participation in the work of mediation between God and men. How essential is the part it sustains in this work is suggested by the Apostle's declaration, "one Mediator, also, between God and men, *himself* man." This mediatorial office Jesus alone of all men sustains. He alone is Prophet, Priest, and King. So exalted, so transcendent, are the services He renders that it is sometimes difficult to make real to our minds that it is through the human nature of Christ they are achieved. And since the Scriptures themselves assure us that the divine nature entered into this partnership by which heaven and earth are united, God and man are reconciled, it is very easy, in the effulgence of the divine glory which invests the Redeemer, to lose sight of that humanity which He ever bore, and by which He accomplished his delivering and saving work. Yet if we commit ourselves trustingly and fearlessly to the authoritative Scriptural representation, we shall soon discover that the humanity of Christ is not set before us in the New Testament as sustaining merely a conditional or adminicular relation to a work whose intrinsic and essential value comes from another

source. On the contrary, throughout its entire achievement we everywhere see as an integral and necessary part of it the obedience, suffering, sacrifice, victory, and glorification of a human nature as real as our own. That this achievement had a lustre and value transcending anything possible in a merely human experience is also true, as the faith of the church has ever held. But we are not to conceive of this as an arbitrary imputation of value. For this humanity was fashioned to be the perfect organ and instrument of revelation, to be freely swayed and controlled in all its movements by the will of God, to be more and more filled with his gifts as its powers expanded from infancy to maturity, to receive the Spirit without measure, to be transfigured by the indwelling Deity, to be glorified in God. All its experiences, whether active or passive, were those of a nature created capacious of Deity. This is true also of other men according to their measure. Indeed, it is the highest note and attribute of humanity at large. Christ could not be a representative man and a mediator, if his humanity were not real. But it lies also in his mediatorship that He is the head of the race, and not a mere member of it, and that humanity in Him becomes receptive of the divine fullness, so that there are gathered up in Him all divine gifts for men.

3. And this leads to a yet higher peculiarity in which the uniqueness of his humanity is evident. The best gifts are personal. The gift of supreme

and infinite love is personal. The divine gift to humanity is the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh." The uniqueness of Christ's humanity most evidently appears in this, that its entire existence is in personal union with the divine nature. Its coming into existence was by an incarnation of the divine Word. We touch here the most mysterious doctrine of Christianity. We approach it first of all as an attested fact. Certain questions respecting it, problems to which it necessarily gives rise, will be considered farther on. Here we deal with it as a revealed fact. The Word became flesh not at Jesus's baptism, not at his resurrection or ascension, but this was the beginning of his life, that the second Person of the Trinity was made in the likeness of man, so that it was predicted that the holy thing which should be born should be called the Son of God, and that the Son of the Virgin should be named Immanuel; and when the event occurred it was announced to the shepherds: "There is born to you this day . . . a Saviour which is Christ the Lord;" and wise men, guided by the star, blended their rejoicings with those of the heavenly host, and when they saw the young child fell down and worshiped Him. Make of these accounts what we may, they are the fitting beginning of the historic life that then appeared, and its only adequate premise, as Origen long ago discerned. And if we pursue the narrative in either of the Gospels we constantly observe the same phenomena. The evidences of a complete

human nature multiply as we read, but not less manifest is the one Person who is the centre to which all attributes and acts are ever referred ; and so wondrously adjusted is all this that, in reviewing the history of the reception which these accounts have received from the great mass of readers, nothing is more striking and nothing more uniform than the conviction which has prevailed that, from the manger to the cross and from the cross to the throne, it is one and only one Person who lived, suffered, died, and was believed to have risen from the tomb and to have ascended on high.

And this first distinct impression is only deepened by the most critical study. In no event of Jesus's history, at no moment, and in no occurrence, whether in the accounts given by the synop- tists or in the more ideal representations of the fourth Gospel, is there disclosed anything like a division of his Person. If He is weary at the well his weariness is that of One conscious of his power to give living water, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst. If He is tempted it is with the voice still audible in the skies : "Thou art my beloved Son." If He is defenseless He knows that with a word legions of angels would gather for his protection. If He prays we hear the words : "Father, glorify Thou Me . . . with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." So when we listen to his declarations respecting himself we are constantly reminded that his consciousness is unlike that of any mere man. We see a

human countenance, but as we gaze it is transfigured. We look upon a human form, but as we behold it ascends and is glorified. For this Son of Man has power to forgive sins, and is come to save the lost and to give his life a ransom, and his flesh is meat indeed. And in the disclosures of prophecy this union of his humanity with divinity is set forth as indissoluble and eternal. What is commonly, though in too limited a way, called his mediatorial kingdom will come to an end when the creation, in the Person of its redemptive Head and Lord, will bow before the throne, and God will be all in all. That cycle of history introduced by Adam's transgression, or earlier in the sin of angelic spirits, will come to a close, and with it that form of dominion determined by the existence of unvanquished rebellion; but the end will be not only a consummation, but a new beginning, — the beginning of a manifestation of the divine glory before impossible and unendurable. Yet still will there be a creation, and that creation will be exalted through its Head; and still at its head will stand the man Christ Jesus, forever receiving the revelations of infinite wisdom and love, forever dispensing them to the universe; and still to this Temple will the tribes go up, and in Him and through Him worship and adore.

II. The unity of Christ's Person. The thoughts thus far presented introduce us to the most difficult problem of Christian theology. They also, it is believed, prepare for its more adequate treatment. There are those who would dismiss it at once as

insoluble and unpractical. But experience shows that such a treatment does not leave the fact to operate in its integrity, but results in one-sided or contradictory statements, in the practical acceptance of inferior and misleading theories, and in a loss of influential religious motives. Theories on such a subject must be imperfect and more or less tentative. They should be controlled by the facts, and should advance with increase in knowledge. But some theory men always will have, for it is an instinct of reason to combine, classify, and hold by means of some governing conception. As a matter of fact, although the more important ecumenical councils proposed no dogma on this subject, a theory first authoritatively stated in the sixth century by a Byzantine emperor, Justin II., in his famous "Edict of Peace," and more fully developed in the symbol of the Sixth Council, and fraught with many and great practical evils, has dominated a large portion of Christendom to the present hour, and appears distinctly in so valuable and popular a work as Canon Liddon's "Bampton Lectures on Our Lord's Divinity." We cannot frame a complete theory, but there is a choice of theories, and modern Theology can at least point out positive advances and improvements of no inferior importance.

The unity of Christ's Person needs to be considered in three relations, namely, in its connection with the personality of the Being who became incarnate, with the act of Incarnation, and with the personal consciousness of the historic Christ.

It is a commonplace of theology that the personality of Christ is from the personality of the Logos. For long this position has been understood to imply the impersonality of the human nature and its subjection to the divine. Canon Liddon, following the theory to which we have just referred, treats Christ's manhood as a vesture or robe or instrument of the eternal Word. All its volitions are willed, he teaches, by God incarnate. Such a conception is inconsistent with the integrity of Christ's human nature, with the exemplary value of his obedience, with revealed facts in his life. It introduces a hopeless breach between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, and thus would bring about a decision of this leading Christological question of our time fatal to the claim of Christianity. But this unfortunate exaggeration should not prejudice us against the important truth that Christ's personality is directly and indissolubly connected with that of the divine Word. The one is a true revelation and outgrowth of the other. The personality of the Word originates the personality realized in the life of Christ, determines its character, gives to it its inward law, secures its unity, and this none the less, but rather all the more, because the humanity of our Lord is ideally complete and perfect.

The Scriptures reveal to us the second Person of the Trinity as the Word, and as the Son, of God. Both appellations lead us to think of God in his ethical nature. He is truth and He is love. The

second Person in the Trinity represents to us God's disposition to reveal and impart himself. Why should God create? He has all the resources of wisdom, power, being, in himself. The reason or motive cannot be found in these perfections. He creates because He is love, and love in God as in man is self-communicative and self-imparting. Creation is divine expression, and it is something more. It is realization. When a distinguished author of fiction was told that the death of a certain character, a creation of her genius, had moved a friend as though personally bereaved, she expressed with greatest intensity the same feeling. Parents live again in their children. Sonship in its highest conception is realization, — the image and reproduction of self-hood. The Love revealed in the eternal Son, the mystery of the divine Sonship, solves the mystery of creation. It determines also its character. The revealing and communicative purpose of the Father through the Son can only find its adequate expression in a nature in which there shall be a realization of the divine nature in the mode and form appropriate to creation. An ideal humanity is the culmination of such a realization. "The Word became flesh." He carries the creative — now also through sin the redemptive — purpose to its height of achievement. He creates a human soul which is as real and true a counterpart and realization of his own nature as He is himself the express image of the Father. And there is no more mystery in this

than there is in God's creating at all. It is but one step farther on and higher up than that of the first creation. The self-revealing, self-communicating Love of God, the Word and Son of God who created in the beginning, creates in "the fullness of the time" a nature which is the perfect counterpart of his own, its human side and means of realization, in order that divine revelation and impartation may reach their highest possible completeness and may not be hindered even by the malevolence and guilt of human sin. The mystery of the Incarnation, like that of creation, loses itself in the higher mystery of a Fatherhood and Sonship in the nature of God, — in other words, in the ineffable fullness of his love.

1. We start, therefore, with a conception of the human nature of Christ as created by the Word and Son of God for the realization in finite form of that which is his own personal characteristic, as created to express his truth and grace, and to share with Him in his Father's love. In its very idea and essence the human nature of Christ is adapted to such a purpose. It is finite, and the Word who created it is infinite. But we do not move in our thinking, if we think correctly on this subject, merely on this plane of contrasts. We may not forget them, but they are only a part of the truth. The divine and human natures in Christ are essentially related to each other. The human nature is the divine nature humanly expressed and realized. The one should be as closely connected with the

other in our conception as a word with the thought it utters. The thought is unexpressed without the word. The word is empty save as it is the bearer of the thought. The relation is as intimate as this, but it is of a higher kind. A word is a breath, a transient, fugitive thing. Christ's human nature is a real image of the divine Word. That Word has personality. His word which He utters in creating the human soul of Christ is personal. The human nature of Christ is in finite form the personal word of that eternal Word. It is not a foreign nature. If it were we could not possibly retain at once its integrity and its personal union with the divine nature. The new and fundamental thought in modern Christology is the essential relation of the two natures, so that either can know and realize itself in the other. This being apprehended, the standing difficulty with the doctrine is, if not removed, so reduced that it ceases to be an objection.

2. This brings us to our second point, the act of incarnation as constitutive of the unity of Christ's Person. We have, as elements of the union, the divine nature as possessed by the Logos, or in that mode of being which characterizes his existence, and an ideally perfect humanity. Such a human nature must be personal. The divine nature in the Logos also is personal. Yet neither in itself is a person. The Logos is a person only with, in, and through the Father and the Spirit. The human nature is a person only with, in, and through the

Logos. The central point of Christ's personality falls into the central point of Absolute Personality. Otherwise a person would be the object of supreme worship exterior to and additional to the one only God. Recent writers who have derived the personality of Christ from the human nature, or else have made it simply a resultant of the union of natures, have not duly guarded this point. They have had a truth at heart, the vindication of the reality of Jesus's humanity. An impersonal human nature, they have seen, is something defective and unreal. But in recovering this essential truth, it is not necessary to go to either of the extremes just indicated. The constitutive act for Christ's Person is the union of two natures. One of these, the human, is only potentially personal, and is capable, by its very constitution, of entering into a divine life, of finding the truth of its existence in God. The other is a particular mode of the divine being, not in itself a person, but the bearer of a personal principle, and capable of self-realization in a human life. The act of incarnation is the union of these two.

3. The self-consciousness of Jesus. We have noticed before what it is as disclosed to us in the evangelical narratives. We consider it now in its basis and necessary form.

All our experiences arise from our constitution as embodied spirits, and our entire consciousness reflects this union of body and soul. So Christ's history has for its foundation the union of two natures. His personality presupposes this union.

It is formative for his life and consciousness, just as the constitution of the soul in union with the body is the foundation of its history. The analogy is not perfect, but in both cases alike two elements without confusion or loss of properties are so united as to be the germ of a development. The personality of Christ existed primarily as a latent power, as does all other human personality. And as the basis was complex, so the unfolding consciousness; never simply divine, never merely human; never the two in addition, or collocation, or separation, the one remaining unaffected by the other; never confused, blended, interchanged. That which is divine shines in and through what is human; that which is human possesses and therefore can reveal what is divine. It is like the union in physics of force and matter, only without there being on either side inertia. It is like the union of reason and understanding in rational thought, only it is far higher than a harmony of faculties. The divine nature and the human interpenetrate each the other. The divine informs the human. The human receives and expresses the divine. The one in condescending love and sympathy makes everything belonging to the other its own. The latter apprehends whatever the former has as its own good, the truth, the perfection in which it finds its own fulfillment. And of this process, which is ever reciprocal, there is in consciousness a centre. It is the personality of the creative Word, but not simply this. It is the personality of the created nature,

but not merely this. It is the one as affected by the other. It is the latter fulfilled in the former. It is that point of rest and union, and therefore of life and power, where the divine nature realizes the experiences of the human as its own, where the human realizes that its completeness and perfection are in God. It is the centre of a divine-human consciousness, and this personal centre is the God-Man.

This personality was not fully realized in the beginning. There was not only growth of the humanity of Jesus, but a progressive union with the divine. Here is the truth in the theories of the Kenotists, who maintain that the Word, at the Incarnation, laid aside, or suspended the exercise of, his attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and the like. This is but a clumsy and somewhat violent and unethical method of appropriating certain undeniable facts; such as the limitation of Jesus's knowledge, the perfect human reality of his earthly life, the veritable growth of his consciousness and personality from the moment of the Incarnation. The Incarnation itself, though real at the beginning, was also a process which had steps which the records of Jesus's life enable us in some degree to trace and understand. At every stage his history had a meaning for himself. Not only his birth, but his visit to the Temple, his baptism, his temptation, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, were epochs in his consciousness, events fraught with meaning and new powers for his own Person. The

babe of Bethlehem resting in its mother's arms was not yet in personality the sleepless sufferer of Gethsemane; the marred and stricken victim on the cross was not yet the Son of Man ascending in the cloud of the Father's glory, the exalted and enthroned Mediator, who is to be the fully manifested Head of the new creation. His life is a history. It is also a divine purpose, a plan of revelation and impartation which includes creation, redemption, and the glories of the eternal reign. On his head are many crowns. The Life of Jesus should be studied as such a history. Everything in his earthly career is preparatory to the heavenly for himself as for others. Everything human in it brings God near to us while remaining most truly human. Everything divine in it is adjusted to such a medium and progress of revelation, and to all its acts of righteousness and holy love.

III. We have already entered upon the third phase of our subject, the significance of his Person. His advent is a part of "the purpose of creation." The motive of redemption lies nearest to us in our consciousness of sin and guilt. But redemption itself cannot be understood apart from creation and its end. Accordingly the apostle whose presentation, in his earlier writings, of man's sin and misery and of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice has shaped Western theology, in his later epistles connects the entire work of redemption with Christ considered as the Creator and the Final Cause of the universe. He who is the Head of the redeemed

body, the church, is before all things, and in Him all things consist, and through Him all things are reconciled, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens. The same conception is dominant in the Gospel and the Epistles of John.

Christ is not only the earthly culmination, but also the eternal source and principle, of revelation. He who created all things is *ipso facto* the Revealer. In the Incarnation He has carried revelation to its highest conceivable stage and mode, however augmented it may be in degree and power. Were the divine Being at any point in the future to cease to make himself known through this method of real manifestation there would be retrogression and decline in God's self-communication to his creatures.

Christ is the Head of the church. All its members are united to each other in Him. We cannot suppose this relation to terminate in the triumph of his kingdom. It is moral and spiritual. Gratitude for redemption can never be exhausted nor superseded. When we further reflect that redemption recovers the image and likeness in which man was created, and which were first fully shown in Jesus, we see that his Headship has a foundation in the permanent constitution of the soul, and is fitly as enduring as its immortality.

When, by the aid of hints and suggestions of revelation, we look out still more widely upon the universe that is and is to be we see an equally imperishable and yet vaster unity. The essence of

all religion is communion with God. The most perfect realization, and therefore the most adequate medium and guaranty of such fellowship, are given in the Incarnation. All the elements of a final, perfect, absolute religion for all finite spirits are realized and made available in the Person of the God-Man. It is fitting that such a Person should be, and should always be, not only the Head of the redeemed, but also the Head of all other holy beings in the entire creation. This is his position according to the Scriptures, and nothing can be conceived more congruous and rational.

Within the narrower range of vision opened to us in the history of the earth and of man science is beginning to discover the traces of a vast progress and development. Such an evolution looks to an Incarnation as its adequate goal. All things point to man, and man is perfected in the Son of Man. The only idea which fulfills the aspirations and harmonizes the discords in man's religious history is such a union of transcendence and immanence, necessity and liberty, idea and fact, law and grace, as meets us in Christ. The history of religion leads on and up to Him, and He possesses all the resources requisite for its greatest possible future growth. He is the Alpha and Omega; the Absolute, revealed; the Infinite, personally disclosed; the eternal Power that makes for righteousness, realized in the Righteous One. The endeavor to Christologize theology, that is, to make Christ the centre, is, in the last analysis, simply a return to

reality, to the truth of fact, of history, of creation, of humanity, of the divine method of revelation, of the actual government and the eternal kingdom of God. It is thinking God's thoughts after Him in his own disclosures of his being, character, and will. A theology which is not Christocentric is like a Ptolemaic astronomy, — it is out of true relation to the earth and the heavens, to God and his universe.

What has been said implies the absoluteness of Christianity. It is the religion of the cross and of redemption ; and it is more. It is the religion of nature and reason as well. Its foundations were laid in creation, in the constitution of the human soul, in its essential relations to the nature of God. It meets the obstacles interposed by sin and guilt, by acts of redeeming love which are its glory ; but its ultimate reason and motive are to be found in the ethical nature of God, which caused Him to will that the good which is original and eternal in Him should be imparted to beings made to be partakers of the divine nature. It comes into existence through the fulfillment of an absolute purpose of divine self-revelation and self-communication. As it is not in its origin contingent upon sin, so it is not to pass away with the conquest of evil. The church has always had some sense of this truth of the essential supremacy of Christianity. Cyprian had never persuaded men that there is no salvation outside of the pale of the church had not Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, proclaimed that there

is but one name wherein we must be saved. The caricature implies the original, the counterfeit the genuine. The church needs to-day, in all its thought and life, the stiffening power and the stimulus of this truth of the absoluteness of Christianity. It is gained by a right apprehension of the Incarnation. And it is, in our judgment, one of the greatest services the "New Theology" is rendering, that it is making more and more evident and familiar both the premise and the conclusion of this great argument, developing the Biblical teachings which authorize it and the auxiliary testimonies which are becoming available through the modern study of the history of religion and through the progress of science.

We cannot dwell as we would upon the immediately practical advantages of a theology which builds upon the fact and doctrine of the Incarnation. It is evident that the more clearly the reality and worth of the Person of Christ are discerned the stronger becomes the motive to every Christian virtue. Nothing, as we have said, at the present time is more needed in this sphere than a firmer conviction of the solidity, the reality, the absolute supremacy of the gospel. Make its central Person contingent, relative, transitory, and such is the outlook of men to-day, and such the whole attitude of their minds to truth, that they cannot be won to that absolute devotion to Christ which is essential to Christian living and Christian work. All men and all generations that have powerfully advanced

Christ's kingdom have first been subdued by Him. He was their absolute Lord. How, with the expansion of knowledge characteristic of our age, how, to-day, is the Person of Christ to fill the vision of his followers as He filled that of the martyr church? The solution of the problem, it is believed, is to be found in such an advanced doctrine of the Incarnation as that we have attempted to outline. With the larger knowledge of creation there should be gained a truer perception of what Dr. Westcott has felicitously called "The Gospel of Creation."¹ The gospel of redemption will not thereby be obscured, but it will be set in larger relations.

We do not claim for the later thought upon the Incarnation any exclusive originality. Fruitful suggestions for this doctrine, reaching beyond the statements of creeds and the ordinary practice of the church, lie all along the path of its history. For half a century it has been specially prominent in theological investigations and controversies. Our contention is that the "New Theology" is appropriating the results of these discussions and applying them, that it is an advance upon previous efforts in the same field, and that its merits in this regard entitle it to friendly consideration, and are a pledge of its usefulness. And for the sake of distinctness we will close with a concise summary

¹ See his instructive and admirable essay with this title in *The Epistles of St. John*, pp. 273-315. London : Macmillan & Co. 1883.

of points in which this progress appears to us to be especially manifest. 1. In a better understanding of Christ's humanity, — its historic reality, its universality, its essential relation to the divine nature, its personality. 2. In a better apprehension of Christ's personality — the personal union in Him of divinity and humanity. Neither nature is sacrificed to the other, and such a conception of each is gained that their union appears as the necessary basis of the one historic, personal life. 3. In a better understanding of the actual history of that life, whether considered in its relation to the divine plan of creation and revelation, or to the actual events in its earthly career, or to its state of exaltation and glorification. 4. In a better understanding of the revealed central position of Christ in the universe, and of the absoluteness of Christianity. 5. In the consequent gain of a better position from which to justify and develop the motives to Christian virtue and activity.

The question which lies nearest the heart of all modern disputes in theology is the one already stated: Is the Jesus whose life we know on its human side the Christ in whom religious faith finds its appropriate and permanently satisfying object? Stated philosophically, all modern conceptions of Christ and of Christianity reduce to these three: We have either the historical without the ideal, or the ideal without the historical, or the union of both. We maintain that the "New Theology"

answers this fundamental question more philosophically, more Biblically, more practically than any preceding theology. The Jesus of history is the Christ of faith ; the Christ of faith is God revealed and known.

III.

THE ATONEMENT.

THE doctrine of Atonement was later in its historical development than the doctrine of Incarnation. Not until council after council had adopted exact articles concerning the Person of Christ was there any considerable discussion concerning the Work of Christ. The fact of atonement through the death of the Redeemer was accepted from the first with penitence and trust, but scarcely any attempt was made to discover the reasons which made it necessary and right that Christ should be offered for the sins of the world. Even in the eleventh century the theory was somewhat prevalent that Christ's death was a ransom paid to the devil. Why the development of this doctrine should have begun so late we need not now take time to inquire. It suggests the fact that there has never at any time been such agreement concerning the philosophy of atonement as has been secured concerning the person of our Lord. The church even now waits for a doctrinal statement which shall be comprehensive, satisfactory, and, at the same time, free from ethical objections and from inconsistencies. It is the object of the present paper

simply to indicate the lines along which intelligent Christian thought is moving, and to recognize some of the conclusions which are gaining acceptance in respect to the revelation of God's love in the sacrifice of Christ. It will be left to the reader to note for himself the modification, or even disappearance, of crude theories through which, at one time or another, atonement has been regarded.

The starting-point from which inquiry has usually set forth has been the sin of man. Man sinned, and the race became corrupted. Therefore, Jesus was born, suffered, and died, in order that man might be saved from sin. But this view is too narrow. It puts part of the truth in place of the whole. It virtually declares that if there had been no sin, we should not have known God in Christ. The old Latin hymn would have been correct in representing sin as a blessing, a *felix culpa*, since through it we have such and so great a Redeemer. There is also a difficulty in believing that but for this insignificant earth the most glorious revelation of God might not have been given at all. The principal defect, however, is that Christ is made contingent on sin, and that sin, therefore, appears to be not only more fundamental than Christ, but an absolute necessity, in order that God might reveal himself in Christ. The old sub- and supralapsarian theories are waymarks of the struggle of profound minds with this great difficulty.

But redemption from sin, even if the most important, is but one of the revelations of God in

Christ; and to understand it we need to find its relation and proportion. The correct and Scriptural starting-point is the mediation of Christ in its universal character. Christ mediates God to the entire universe. Through Christ the worlds were made, and through Him they consist. In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible. To Him ultimately not the earth only, but the whole universe is to be made subject, things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. John as well as Paul perceives this truth. Indeed, the Gospel of John comes to earthly redemption from the larger view of universal mediation. First we learn that all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made, — and not until He is known as Head of the universe do we perceive, nor can we well understand, that He is the Life and Light of men. The whole truth, then, is that Christ is the revealing or manifesting principle; or, more exactly, that through the Logos, the Word, the second Person of the Trinity, that which is absolute fullness and truth in God is communicated into finite existences; that through the Eternal Word the created universe is possible; that therefore the universe is Christ's, the revolving worlds and they that dwell therein are his, to the glory of God the Father. The created universe and all rational beings are through Christ and in Christ. Therefore He mediates or reveals God to any part of his universe

according to the condition or need which may exist in that part. If at any point his world is sick, weary, guilty, hopeless, there Christ is touched and hurt, and there He appears to restore and comfort. This earth is, it may be, the sheep lost in the wilderness, while the ninety and nine are safe in the fold. Christ cannot be indifferent to the least of his creatures in its pain and wickedness, for his universe is not attached to him externally, but vitally. He is not a governor set over it, but is its life everywhere. He feels its every movement, most of all its spiritual life and spiritual feebleness or disease, and appears in his glorious power even at the remotest point. If there were but one sinner, Christ would seek him. If but one planet were invaded by sin, Christ would come to its relief. It is, of course, true that in order to reveal God in a world of sin and guilt the historical conditions, and especially the suffering conditions, of our Lord's life must have been, in important respects, what they would not otherwise have been. It is also probable that the profoundest disclosure of the love of God in Christ has been made in the redemption of sinful man. But only the conditions, not the power and reality of Christ, are contingent on sin. As the redemption of men reveals to principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God, so *our* thought of the Person and work of Christ is enlarged by knowing his universal relations, and we perceive more clearly the significance of his humiliation to earth. Other orders of beings

know Christ better because He suffered on earth. "This planet," says Dorner, "may be the Bethlehem of the universe." But if this planet and the sin of man exhaust the meaning of Christ's mediation, we are left among absurdities and confusions. Bethlehem itself could not be a sacred name if there were no Jerusalem, nor Samaria, nor uttermost parts of the earth, to which from Bethlehem He goes out, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The opinion, therefore, has reason in it that there would have been the Incarnation even if there had been no sin. It is not easy to believe that the Word of God would not have become flesh but for sin. Man was created a physical being. He was destined for a physical, earthly development, and to people the material world. In his perfection he is to have that which corresponds to the body, — a spiritual body. His knowledge of God was to come through Christ; and the nearest manifestations, we can readily imagine, would in any event have corresponded with the actual conditions of man's existence and progress. It may be, indeed, that the human race would have come earlier into the knowledge of God through Christ if there had been no sin; that, while sin had much to do with the conditions of our Lord's life and work, it may actually have retarded his historical appearance.

It would be interesting to show, if space allowed, that the Incarnation itself has important relations

to the reconciliation of man and God ; that the Person of Christ, realizing as it does the affinity of divine and human, the perfection of human character in union with God, and other possibilities of humanity, has more to do with our restoration to God than we have commonly supposed. And it is always to be remembered that the work of Christ has no meaning apart from his Person ; that his work is not something set off by itself on which we can depend, as if the Atonement were a thing, a quantity of suffering endured, an impersonal result. " His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Having gained what may be called the perspective of the earthly revelation of God in Christ, we are at a point where we can inquire concerning the specific relations of our Lord's sacrifice to the redemption of sinners. The very best word the gospel gives to express the complete result of Christ's work is reconciliation, a word signifying that God is brought into a new relation to man and that man is brought into a new relation with God. The ultimate fact, however, is that God's relation to man is changed in Christ from what it otherwise could be, and that therefore man's relation to God is changed. Redemption thus originates with God, who in Christ finds a way through obstacles to the sinner, so that He can righteously forgive and bless. Because God is reconciled in Jesus Christ man repents and begins a new life. The gospel

never reverses this order of dependence. It does not say that because man repents God is a forgiving God, but because God is a forgiving God therefore man repents. And it teaches also that God can be a forgiving God, because Christ suffered and died and rose again.

How and why is this true? Why cannot God forgive outright and unconditionally? What is that in the Person and work, and especially in the death of Christ without which God could not forgive men? What does Christ do to change the feeling or attitude of God towards the sinful race? We no longer ask whether repentance is necessary or not, but only if repentance is not enough; why should there be more and other than the turning away of man from sin and folly to God?

It might be enough to suggest, at this point, that the power and inclination to repent are not found except when God is revealed in Christ; that only because Christ has brought God to men in a new light are they stirred to penitence. But we must search for deeper truth.

There is a movement of thought which has gone beneath or has gone back of the thinking which at one time was satisfied to rest in the sovereignty of God. All commands, penalties, favors, blessings issue, it was once thought, out of the will of God. It was God's will to accept Christ's sufferings as a substitute for the punishment man deserves, and ignorant, wicked man had no right to inquire, Why doest thou thus? But the conviction is now clear

that the will of God is directed by the reason of God ; that instead of saying it is right because God wills it we should rather say God wills it because it is right. Right and wrong, goodness and badness, holiness and sin, have their own intrinsic quality according to what they are. Righteousness is grounded in reason, is rational. Sin is against reason, is absurd. The consequences of holiness and of sin cannot be set aside by the will of God. His fiat cannot change the right and the reason of things. Therefore He does not punish man merely because He has threatened to punish, but He threatens punishment because it must in the nature of the case inevitably follow on sin. God cannot bless man in his sin ; otherwise He would not be God, and sin would not be sin. Distinctions of right and wrong, of true and false, would disappear, and moral chaos would ensue. The opinion that because God is good He will not let his children suffer, but will forgive them and save them, sees only the happiness of man, and has no perception of ethical well-being. What we are now emphasizing is the marked tendency of thought to recognize the intrinsic, necessary character of law and right, and the inevitableness of the results of conduct. This necessity was present to Anselm when he formulated the theory that an exact equivalent must be rendered for the penalty of sin ; that God must be satisfied completely, and could be satisfied only by the death of Christ, which takes the place of the infinite penalty of sin. His use of the

principle was too literal and even mathematical, but he opened a vein of neglected truth. He emphasized the necessity which resides in the ethical being of God, and which even his will cannot contradict nor supersede. The speculative thought of to-day which is farthest removed from the influence of the gospel cannot escape this conclusion. The ethical necessities are recognized. One writer who at the beginning of his book declares his independence of presuppositions on one side or the other comes at length, in his closing chapter, to the conclusion that of necessity eternal perdition awaits those who transgress ethical law, and that the hand of omnipotence cannot snatch the wicked from their doom.

The clearer recognition of ethical truth, as grounded in law and reason, has been accompanied by important modifications in the view of atonement. It is no longer believed that personal merit and demerit can be transferred from one to another. It is not believed that an exact quantity of punishment can be borne by an innocent for a guilty person. It is not believed that the consequences of sin can be removed from the transgressor by passing them on to another. Conduct, character, and condition are inseparable. The results of sin are part of the ethical personality, and cannot be detached, nor borne by another.

But more than this is to be remarked. Not only have particular theories of atonement which are obviously artificial and unethical been discarded,

but atonement itself has been declared impossible. It is thought that there can be no deliverance whatever from the hard consequences of wrong-doing ; that whatsoever a man soweth that must he also reap ; that Jesus has no other power than that of a teacher who shows men the right way, and summons them to such endeavor after improvement as they may still be capable of making.

Now the message of the gospel unquestionably is that man is not bound under ethical in the sense in which he is bound under physical necessity ; that forces are available for the moral and spiritual life by which man can be delivered from the worst consequences of sin, and can become a new creature. Transformation may be rapid and complete. Man may be translated from the dominion of merciless necessity into the life of freedom and love. The new and higher force is the revelation of God in Christ, through which the power of sin is broken and the penalty of sin remitted. If all this is true, the gospel gains a profounder meaning than it has ever yielded before. The church comes now to man, well aware that he cannot be separated from custom, habit, heredity, fixedness of character, the social organism of which he is part. It is seen that redemption must be grounded in reason, and must meet the actual conditions of life and character and society. Atonement must express and reveal God as the supreme Reason and perfect Righteousness, who cannot deny himself, and who cannot disregard nor annul the moral law which is

established in truth and right. Christian thought, having established itself on the intrinsic, absolute right and on the inexorableness of law so firmly that these may be accepted as postulates in all the inquiry, agreeing so far forth with Anselm on the one hand and with the latest natural ethics on the other, is going forward now to learn if any ethical ends are secured by the revelation of God in Christ, and secured in such a way that God energizes in man and society for a moral transformation so radical and complete that it may be called salvation, redemption, eternal life, divine sonship.

The New England theology is distinguished among systems of religious thought in this century in that it took up the problem at this stage and tried to find the truth in this relation. It attempted to discover the ethical *ends* which are secured by the atonement. It emphasized the fact that other methods than punishment can express the character of sin in the sight of God and of the universe. It asked the right question, and gained part of the right answer. It has not held its ground, because it practically exhausted the significance of atonement under the analogy of human governments and courts of justice, which are but one result, and rather a rude result, of the ethical life of man, and also because the approach of the penitent to God in Christ is more direct than it can ever be under the thought of a vast universal system of government. This is the question to-day concerning atonement, — What moral and spiritual ends are secured

by the sacrificial life and death of Christ? How does God's attitude towards man change, and man's attitude towards God change, so that there is efficient power for the transformation of ethical and spiritual life as against the tendencies of moral corruption? Evidently the result is of a kind that cannot be brought about by sheer omnipotence, but only, if at all, by truth and love. Thought must move in the spiritual, not in the physical realm.

There are two lines of approach, which converge towards the same result, and both of which are determined by the mediation of Christ in what may properly enough be called his substitutionary relation to men.

One view of atonement is gained by considering the historical Christ in relation to humanity and as identified with it; in which view we see that the race of men with Christ in it is essentially different in fact, and therefore in the sight of God, from the same race without Christ in it. It was found in our study of the Incarnation that Christ's uniqueness is his universality; that while every other man has but a limited relation to his fellows Christ has affinity for all men; that He draws all men unto Him; that He possesses that which all men need. So we have become accustomed to the thought that Christ has an organic relation to the race. He is an individual, but an individual vitally related to every human being. He preferred to be called the Son of Man. Paul sees in Him the Head of humanity, the second Adam. He is one who is not

himself a sinner, yet is a man ; who is not himself contending against sinful and corrupt tendencies, yet has so identified himself with humanity that its burden of suffering rested on Him, and every man was within reach of his sympathy. His divinity, indeed, is in nothing more clearly shown than in his perfect humanity ; in the fact that He was not merely the ideal man, but the universal man ; his humanity not something strange to his divinity, but its best and purest organ.

Humanity may thus be thought of as offering something to God of eminent value. When Christ suffers, the race suffers. When Christ is sorrowful, the race is sorrowful. Christ realizes what humanity could not realize for itself. The race may be conceived as approaching God, and signifying its penitence by pointing to Christ, and by giving expression in Him to repentance which no words could utter. Thus we can regard Him as our substitute, not because He stands apart, not because He is one and the race another, but because He is so intimately identified with us, and because in essential respects the life of every one is, or may be, locked in with his. The representative power which belongs to man in his various relations comes to its perfect realization in Christ. In the family, in government, in business, in society, representative or substitutionary relations are the rule, not the exception. Much more has Christ the power perfectly to represent us or to be substituted for us, because there is no point of our real life where He is

not in contact with us. Here is the truth of McLeod Campbell's view of atonement. The entire race repents or is capable of repenting through Christ. It renders in Him a complete repentance. He is the Amen of humanity to the righteousness of God's law, to the ill desert of sin, to the justice of God's judgments. What was dimly shadowed under the old dispensation and in heathen worship, through sacrifices expressing by an act what could not be expressed by a word, is taken up and carried on to perfect realization by the sacrifice and death of Christ, in which humanity offered its best, its holiest, to God. Thus all the figures and phraseology of the altar are properly and naturally applied to Christ. He is offered for our sins, in our stead, for our sakes. He is a propitiation to God. These expressions symbolize a real truth, because Christ was made in all respects like unto his brethren.

But Christ's power to represent or be substituted for man is always to be associated with man's power to repent. The possibility of redeeming man lies in the fact that although he is by act and inheritance a sinner, yet under the appropriate influences he is *capable* of repenting. The power of repentance remains, and to this power the gospel addresses itself. Christ suffering and sympathizing with men is able to awaken in them and express for them a real repentance. It is to this power that Christ, the holy and the merciful, attaches himself. Realizing it in some, and being able to realize it in

all, He represents humanity before God. Now the power of repentance, which, so far as it exists, is the power of recuperation, is superior to the necessities of past wrong-doing and of present habit. It is the one fact which can never be estimated for what it may do, which baffles the calculation of the wisest observers. The penitent man, so far as he really repents, is in the exercise of a freedom which resists and almost subjugates the forces of evil. In union with Christ, who brings spiritual truth and power to man, repentance is radical. Man left to himself cannot have a repentance which sets him free from sin and death. But in Christ he is moved to repentance which is revolutionary; in Christ he can express repentance, for in union with Christ he adopts the feeling of Christ concerning sin against the God of love. If man unaided could become truly repentant, he would become holy, and would be the child of God. This was admitted by Jonathan Edwards. But it is only in Christ that he has such knowledge of God and of himself as is necessary to a repentance which is revolutionary. It is not true, we admit and insist, that repentance without Christ is availing for redemption, for man of himself cannot repent; but, on the other hand, it is not true that Christ's atonement has value without repentance. Christ's sacrifice avails with God because it is adapted to bring man to repentance. This gives it ethical meaning and value. He is one, in with the race, who has the power of bringing it into sympathy with his own feeling

towards God and towards sin ; and so God looks on the race as having this power in Christ, a power which, when realized, melts away the iron fetters of what we call necessity and fate. The significance of the gospel on this side is that the sacrifice of Christ is not in vain ; that on account of Christ man can be delivered from condemnation, and can have God's smile instead of his frown ; that the captive of nature and law can go free as a penitent, restored child of God, through the love of Him who is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

The substitution is not of Christ standing on this side for the race standing on that side, but the race with Christ in it is substituted for the race without Christ in it. This Christ in with the race is regarded by God as one who has those powers of instruction, sympathy, purity which can be imparted to his brethren. Likewise the individual in Christ takes the place of the individual without Christ, is looked on as one whom Christ can bring to repentance and obedience, and so is justified even before faith develops into character. All is not accomplished instantly, but the result was assured when Christ became obedient to the death of the cross. He saw Satan falling from heaven when as yet his disciples had made but a beginning of the subjugation of evil.

The race is reconstituted in Christ, and is other in the sight of God, because different in fact, because containing powers for repentance and holiness which, without Christ, it would be hopelessly destitute of.

The other line of approach is from God to man. The punishment and consequences of sin make real God's abhorrence of sin, and the righteousness of law. The sufferings and death of his only Son also realize God's hatred of sin and the righteous authority of law ; therefore punishment need not be exacted. This is a familiar line of reflection, and need not be followed in detail. Its meaning is that God cannot be regardless of law nor indifferent to sin in saving man from punishment. If the thought went no farther, this, at least, would be implied : that our redemption is not the act of omnipotence, but that it is in accordance with the rational and ethical being both of God and man.

It must be confessed, however, that it is not clear how the sufferings and death of Christ can be substituted for the punishment of sin ; how, because Christ made vivid the wickedness of sin and the righteousness of God, man is therefore any the less exposed to the consequences of sin. We must go on to the fact that Christ makes real very much more than God's righteous indignation against sin. The punishment of sin does not save men. It only vindicates God and his law. Christ, while declaring God's righteousness, reveals God seeking men, and at the cost of sacrifice. He shows that God loves men, and energizes in Christ to bring them to himself ; that really the wrath of God is only a manifestation of the love of God, since God cannot allow the sinner to be blessed in his sin. The very fact, that God's Son cannot be among men for

their redemption except at the cost of suffering from the sin of man and of dying at their hands, shows both the intrinsic badness of sin and the undiscouraged love of God to sinners. What really occurs is the approach of God to men in Christ, who shows by his words and life the Father unto them ; who draws them back to God in recoil from sin, and whose suffering, by reason of sin, condemned sin more unmistakably than the punishment of it could have done.

Sin is to be looked on not only as an obstacle which keeps man from coming to God, but also as an obstacle which keeps God from coming to man. God loves man, and would bless him. But sin impedes God's love, sets it back, awakens God's disapproval, so that instead of blessing he must condemn and punish. The ideal relation of God is love, but the actual relation is wrath. The sin of man prevents God's love from flowing forth, so that the God of love is in reality hostile to man. In Christ God can come to man in another relation, because Christ is a new divine power in the race to turn it away from sin unto God.

God does not become propitious because man repents and amends, for that is beyond man's power. He becomes propitious because Christ, laying down his life, makes the race to its worst individual *capable* of repenting, obeying, trusting ; and He does this in such a way that God's abhorrence to sin is realized, the majesty of law honored, the sinner and the universe convinced of the righteousness of the divine judgments.

The first and the greatest punishment of sin is separation from God, the withdrawal of those influences from God by which man is blessed. The consequences of sin in body and character are secondary, are only results of separation from God. It is because God is far away that such consequences follow. In Christ, the lowly, the suffering, the triumphant, God can come near to man to bless him. Christ brings God the Person to man the person, and in such manner that God is known as the God of holy love, the loving and holy Father. The goodness of God leads man to repentance. Man is at peace with God, and the worst punishment of sin is righteously removed.

It is true, then, that Christ suffered for our sins, and that because He suffered our sins are forgiven. But the suffering was borne because it lay in the path to redemption. The realization of God's love in Christ was possible only through the suffering and death of Christ ; and because He suffered and died in bringing the knowledge and love of God to men it is no longer necessary that men should suffer all the consequences of sin. The ethical ends of punishment are more than realized in the pain and death of the Redeemer, through whom man is brought to repentance. His death is a new fact, an astonishing, revealing, persuasive, melting fact, in view of which it would be puerile to exact literal punishment of those who are thereby made sorry for sin and brought in penitence to God. But it is all inseparable from repentance or appro-

priation. There is thus a limit to the vicarious principle. It is limited in its application by the personal relation of every man to Christ. He who is not moved to penitence and faith by Christ is under a greater condemnation. If he is incorrigible the condemnation is final and irreversible.

The large truth of atonement, however illustrated, and from whatever side approached, is that *except for Christ* God could only punish sinners by withdrawing himself more and more from them; that in Christ their repentance and renewal become possible and God can bring them to their true destination. The race is other to God than it could be without Christ, and God is other to the race than He could be without Christ. That is, Christ is the Mediator between God and man. Starting from the human side we may say that God is the reconciled God, the forgiving God, because man in Christ, seeing God as He is, and sin as it is, is the penitent man, the believing man, the Christian man. Or reversing the order and advancing to the ultimate fact that redemption originates with God, we may say that man is the penitent and obedient man because God in Christ is the reconciling and forgiving God. In any thought of atonement and redemption we may not lose sight of Christ's vital relation either with God or man. His work is one of reconciliation, of mediation. But the work originates with God. Man could never have produced the Christ. God so loved the world that He gave his Son. It is therefore the final fact that God is

reconciled to man, and therefore man is reconciled to God.

It is not to be supposed, however, that God has been reconciled to the world only eighteen hundred years ; that before Christ came He was the God of justice and since then has been the God of mercy. Strictly speaking, there was never a time when God was not reconciled, not having been before, for the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. It was in the divine purpose from eternity that there should be incarnation and atonement. But as manifested or realized in time, from our point of view, God's disposition was changed when Christ suffered and died. At least, the manifestation of God's grace waited for the manifestation of Christ and depended on it. Therefore we can say "before" and "after" in relation to redemption through Christ. But considered either as historically manifested, or as eternally purposed, it is true that but for Christ God would be forever alienated from men. It is on account of Christ that God can forgive, on account of Christ that men are not left helpless and condemned under the necessities of unchangeable law. Humanity with Christ in it is propitiated to the divine thought from all eternity. Not till the propitiation is realized do we know that a sufficient reason exists to make it right and possible for God to forgive sin. To the world before Christ came God was unreconciled, because the world had no knowledge of God in Christ. To the individual, so long as he knows God only on

the side of nature and law, God is unreconciled. Not till he sees Christ in his sacrificial love does he know that God can and will forgive. The actual sufferings and death of Christ in history are not, however, a mere seeming. A realized is not the same as an unrealized purpose. The sacrifice of Christ on earth has a real value, and is not fully operative until it is an accomplished fact. The complete truth is that the sacrifice of Christ is an indispensable condition of the forgiveness of sin.

It may be said, then, in view of our discussion, that the present movement of thought seeks to find the union of objective and subjective elements. At certain periods the sacrifice of Christ and its results towards God were looked on as external to men, and almost independent of them. There was a definite reality which could be measured and set off by itself. At other periods the results in experience and faith have been more prominent. The Atonement has been thought of as an influence working in man, and as having no reality or meaning apart from that. The mutual relation of the great reality of reconciliation and the appropriation of faith is coming to be more clearly recognized. God in Christ, and Christ in man. "I in them and Thou in me, that they may be perfected into one."

It may be thought that the battle was long ago decided concerning the *extent* of atonement, that the Atonement is generally believed to be universal in extent, not for the elect alone, but for the whole

world, and that no one questions it. But all that is involved in its universality has not been accepted. Can it be considered universal if a large portion of the race know nothing of the historical Christ and the redemption that is in Him? The extent of atonement resides not so much, it is to be remembered, in the thing done, in the ample provision made, but rather in the personality of Christ. He is the universal Person, as we said at the outset. His religion, therefore, is the universal, absolute religion. There is no salvation in any other. He alone is able to bring God and man together. This would seem to lead us to the conclusion that the final word concerning destiny is not pronounced for any man till he knows Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Further consideration of this inference will be found in connection with the discussion of eschatology. It is mentioned now as bearing on the relation of the divine justice to the divine mercy. The view has been taken that justice condemns the sinner to death before or until atonement is made, and that Christ rescues the sinner from his just doom. It has been said, therefore, that God *must* be just, and *may* be merciful, as if the exercise of mercy were not necessary to God in the sense in which justice is necessary. But we must now conclude that justice does not pronounce its final word till God has revealed himself in all his intended manifestations of righteousness and love. Justice is concerned that every attribute of God should be displayed ; is as jealous for the rights of

love as for those of holiness. If it is God's very nature to love, if it is a desire of his to save men from sin, justice sees to it that love is not deprived of its rights, and is not hindered in any of its impulses. We may go so far as to say that it would not be just for God to condemn men hopelessly when they have not known Him as He really is, when they have not known Him in Jesus Christ. And it is evidently the intent of God that all men should know Him through Christ. The judgment does not come till the gospel has been preached to all nations. The gospel is preached to a nation, not when within certain geographical boundaries it has been proclaimed at scattered points, but only when in reality all individuals of all the nations have known it.

Atonement, that is, the gospel, is universal, absolute. It is to be made known to every creature, and then cometh the end. To suppose that such knowledge of God as reason and conscience give is, in reality, the knowledge of God in Christ, is to reduce the historical Christ and atonement through his sacrifice to an accidental, precarious position. There is no evidence whatever that the race is divided into two great sections, one of which is dealt with on the basis of the gospel, and the other on the basis of law and natural conscience — one on a basis of justice, the other on a basis of grace. As, before Christ came, God exercised forbearance for the sins of the past and because Christ was coming, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent,

so ultimately all the nations and all the generations are to be dealt with through Him who tasted death for every man. This is admitted in principle, but denied in fact, by those who assume that salvation is possible only through Christ, but believe that the power of the gospel is felt by those and may be availing for those who know nothing about it. This reduces God's dealings with men to magic, and makes the cross superfluous. It is no longer a necessity that Christ should have suffered and died. The Atonement is only a slightly more vivid exhibition of that love and grace which are really open to all men apart from the sacrifice of Christ.

It is the function of the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ, and show them unto men. The dispensation of the Spirit follows and assumes the accomplished work of the historical Christ. Before this the Holy Spirit could not be given in his fullness, because Jesus was not yet glorified. All this means that the supreme, final, absolute revelation of God to men is in the Person and work of Jesus Christ; that, therefore, justice does not pronounce the word of destiny till love and mercy have gone forth to all those children who are partakers of the same flesh and blood of which He took part. If no man cometh to the Father but by Christ, we conclude that without Him — and almost as certainly we conclude that without the knowledge of Him — no man can be brought back to God. Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

In the Atonement Christ the Son of man brings all humanity to God. No member of the race is separate from him who thus offers himself.

In the Atonement God provided redemption for the world by realizing his holy love in the eyes of all the nations.

The ultimate fact for every man will be his relation to Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and who in all things was made like unto his brethren.

IV.

ESCHATOLOGY.

A THEOLOGICAL professor, having been invited to give a course of lectures on Eschatology, declined on the ground that he could not separate that subject from the rest of his doctrinal system and discuss it independently. There is no doctrine, indeed, which can be taken out of its relation to other doctrines and remain intelligible. The paradox might be maintained that no doctrine should be considered until all the other doctrines had been discussed. It is especially true of eschatology that correct views depend on the conceptions one has, not only of the several truths, but of the very character, significance, and tendency of the gospel as a whole. To some it seems easy to give, and legitimate to expect, a direct answer to any question that may be asked concerning the final destinies of men. When inquiry is made, for instance, as to the time within which probation is limited, why cannot any one express his opinion in a Yes or No? But while one's affirmative or negative may be all that his controversial opponent cares to ascertain, yet the reasons which lead to a given conclusion are of the utmost importance, for they both interpret and

qualify the final answer, even if that answer is expressed in a monosyllable. The view which is taken of the person of Christ, of atonement, of the entire revelation of God in the gospel, must determine the views which are to be held concerning the age which follows after this earthly period — concerning the destiny of individuals, nations, the human race. It may seem also that an appeal to Scripture should be decisive on all the vexed questions which have arisen as to the last things. But if there were unmistakable declarations in the Bible, there would be no vexed questions. Besides, on this subject as on all other subjects, Scripture is cumulative and progressive along the line of developing principles, so that the triumphs and judgments of the future must be seen in the perspective of the whole revelation God has given in Jesus Christ. Christianity must be understood profoundly if a comprehensive view is to be gained of the ultimate issues of human destiny under the gospel. It is our intention, however, to keep our reasoning well within the recognized teaching of the New Testament, and to consider, so far as may be necessary, particular passages which are claimed to be decisive of controverted points. Our method is to recognize first some of the great facts and principles of the gospel which must underlie any conclusions on this subject, leaving for the sequel some discussion of a single related question about which agreement is not at present complete.

Two observations may be offered by way of pref-

ace: one, that we are moving in the realm, not of accomplished history, but of unfulfilled prophecy. The statements of Scripture which relate to judgment and heaven and hell are predictive, and therefore have the characteristics of prophetic teaching. We find grand outline, dependence of results on moral conditions, great spiritual contrasts, rather than minute details of time and circumstance. The future is not, however, all vague and undiscernible. But, since the teaching is prophetic, we know where we may and where we may not look for certainty: we may be more certain of principles than of the particular application of principles. For instance, we know that the redeemed are to be forever with Christ, but we do not know what that union will involve of condition and service. The other observation is, that these predictions are chiefly occupied with the coming triumphs of the gospel. The wicked are, indeed, frequently warned of their danger; but when thought is directed onwards it is almost invariably for the purpose of giving assurance that the kingdom of Christ will reach at length a glorious consummation. The condemnation of the wicked is sometimes represented as part of that triumph and incident to it. The dark fate of the wicked is but the shadow cast by the brightness of the glory. There is accordingly a clearer disclosure of the blessedness of the redeemed and the victories of the gospel than of the condition of the lost. The kingdom of redemption is not a point of light in the midst of sur-

rounding darkness, but the wicked are a point of darkness in the midst of surrounding light. Even so severe a thinker as Professor Shedd concludes that the bottomless pit is an insignificant hole to which the refuse of mankind is consigned.¹

It is important to learn first if there are any central facts or principles from which we can proceed in the attempt to reach sound conclusions.

A. THE FACT AND THE PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT.

1. The Fact. Predictions of the future carry us on to the day of judgment as the time when the consummation of the gospel will be accomplished. Then the destiny of all men will be irrevocably fixed. It will be the final crisis for the human race. Whatever may be the decisive point in time for individuals, this is unquestionably represented as the crisis for humanity as a whole under the gospel. The first advent of Christ was unto salvation. The second advent is unto judgment and victory. After that time the kingdom of righteousness will be undisturbed by oppositions of evil. Until that time men will be translated from the kingdom of sin into the kingdom of Christ. After the judgment there is no reversal of conditions, but only the fulfillment of that which is already determined.

¹ "Hell is only a corner of the universe. The Gothic etymon denotes a covered-up hole. In Scripture hell is a 'pit,' a 'lake;' not an 'ocean.' It is 'bottomless,' but not boundless." — *North American Review*, February, 1885, page 170.

The time of judgment is left uncertain. The gospel must first be preached to the nations, and, therefore, as was observed in the preceding discussion concerning atonement, not at scattered points within each geographical empire, but in reality to all people. We need not take space here to delineate the intervening advances of Christianity on earth, with regard to which prediction is not wanting in the New Testament. Neither do we linger to indicate the conditions under which the redeemed after judgment will come to perfection. We are now emphasizing the fact, as one of the most evident in the Scriptural teaching, that the day of judgment — the second coming of Christ — is the final and supreme crisis for the human race.

The purposes of our present discussion do not require us to consider the belief in universal restoration nor the belief in conditional immortality, although we are of course aware that a complete treatment of eschatology would include the consideration of those opinions. Our object at present, as interpreters of progressive orthodoxy, is to inquire what opinion is to be maintained by those who do not believe that all men will be finally redeemed, and who do not discover any Biblical warrant for the expectation that any one endowed with rational and spiritual powers will cease to exist. Scripture predicts, then, as a great fact to be realized in the future, that there is to be a day of judgment, when there will be a final separation of the righteous from the wicked.

2. The Principle of Judgment. In another respect the predictions of Scripture are unmistakable. It is clear that Christ is to be the judge. Christ is to be on the judgment seat. Again and again this is plainly declared. The Son of Man is to be judge of the world. The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory all nations shall be gathered before Him. That judgment is to be rendered by Christ is taken for granted throughout the New Testament in many an allusion and assumption, as if every one who knows anything of the gospel knows that Christ will come to be our judge. Now this means more than that in addition to his offices of Redeemer and Master Christ is also appointed Judge. It means that all men are to be judged under the gospel; to be judged by their relation to Christ. God reveals himself in Christ for the enlightenment and redemption of men. This is the clearest, the most gracious, the supreme revelation; and if men are judged by Christ, they are judged in accordance with that revelation which He brought to the world. They are not to be judged under the light of reason and conscience alone, but under the light of the gospel of Christ. They are to come before his judgment seat, not as those who are dragged there forcibly to meet a judge of whose person, character, or even existence they know nothing, but as those who are brought there as the necessary result of the knowledge of God which has been given them

through Him before whom they stand to be judged. When we read that Christ is to be the judge, we are to understand that the judgment will be a Christian judgment. As one's friendships are a disclosure of himself, as what one finds in any embodiment of beauty or greatness or goodness indicates what his own perceptions and aspirations are, so what one finds in Christ, what Christ means and is to him, is the complete revelation of his character and deserving. If there is no form nor comeliness that those beholding Christ should desire Him, this argues no defect nor lack in Christ, but blindness and evil in those for whom He has no beauty. This principle of judgment in relation to Christ is one of the results of the fact that Christianity is the universal religion, the final, supreme revelation of God to men. Christ, as has been shown in preceding discussions, is the universal man. He is the Son of Man. His relationship is not tribal or national, but human, as comprehensive as the race. He is the second Adam, the head and progenitor of renewed humanity. His invitations, commands, promises, are in universals. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Whosoever believeth on me shall never die." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He died for the sins of the world. He tasted death for every man. The uniform teaching of the New Testament is that there is no salvation except in Christ. The universality of Christianity is accepted to-day as a postulate by nearly all schools

of Christian thought. In accordance with this teaching of the gospel is the prediction, repeatedly made, that Christ is to judge the whole world, all the nations, all the dead, small and great.

It is in consequence of this principle that we believe the knowledge of God in Christ to be finally decisive of character and destiny. Whether or not any knowledge of God besides that given by the gospel is decisive, there can be no question that the gospel does determine the destiny of all to whom it is made known. There are no higher, no more influential motives under which man can be brought to God. If Christ does not, no other power can draw man to God. Whoever will not believe on Christ is incorrigible and hopelessly impenitent. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, not because the divine patience but because the divine resources are exhausted. There is no other whom God can send to those who will not reverence his Son. Therefore a process of judgment is already going on. Wherever the gospel is proclaimed, Christ is already testing men. Character is becoming fixed for good or evil as men yield to his approaches or repel them. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God." For this reason the gospel is urgent with men. It gives them no promise of to-morrow. Its word is Now. Repent now. Believe now. This is the day of grace, because God is revealed in Christ, and now you are moved to repent of sin and believe in Christ. The urgency

is not in view of the fact that death may come suddenly, though that is a solemn consideration, but rather in view of the fact that to-morrow there may be no inclination to respond to the love of God which is offered in Christ, and which to-day is neglected or rejected. "To-day if ye will hear his voice *harden not your hearts.*" The fathers in the wilderness were not destroyed at once. Forty years long did God deal with them, but in vain. "Behold now is the acceptable time." Thus it may be that the destiny of some is irreversibly determined long before they die. That is a decisive point whenever Christ is presented and there is an inclination to receive and obey Him. When acceptance of Him is real the believer is saved forever from sin. When rejection of Him is final, so that there is no further possibility that Christ will win response, there is no remaining hope of deliverance and purification from sin. It is, therefore, a legitimate and almost necessary conclusion that the destiny of all men to whom the gospel is given in this earthly life is decided while they are in the body. The apostle, addressing those who in this earthly tabernacle already know Christ, reminds them of the time approaching when they will be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body. He implies that the earthly life is decisive for those to whom he was writing, although he was thinking of the fidelity rather than the salvation of believers. There is much reason also, in the nature

of the case, to believe that this present life is the most favorable opportunity for moral renewal in Christ.¹ The gospel is an earthly, historical religion, wrought out in the deeds and sacrifices of the man Christ Jesus, who lived under the conditions of a human, earthly life, who dwelt in the cities and villages of Judea, who walked in the valleys and on the mountains of Galilee, and who died on a hillside of this earth. Our bodily life is the acceptable time to be saved by Him who in the days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.

At this point the discussion might terminate. The principle of judgment in accordance with which the destinies of men are determined we believe to be that which has now been defined. As to the condition of those who are finally condemned the Bible gives only obscure hints and vague imagery, and we certainly have no heart to speculate on either the surroundings or the feelings of the lost. As to the condition of the redeemed, we believe that

¹ The words "also, in the nature of the case" have been inserted in the sentence as it was first printed in the *Andover Review*. The meaning without this clause is apparent as explained by what immediately follows. But either through misunderstanding or for some other reason the sentence has been detached from its connection and satirized by some writers as if we had no stronger word to say even concerning those to whom the gospel is preached in this life. The close of the paragraph is merely a secondary consideration, in addition to the urgent motives to repentance already mentioned in the very same paragraph.

they are with Christ and share his glory, probably with more fullness after the day of judgment than during the period between death and judgment. But our present discussion, as we have already indicated, does not require detailed inquiry concerning the blessedness of the saved. We could stop here, but for a related question which has long perplexed and disturbed believers. It is a question as to the judgment and the destiny of those to whom the gospel is not made known while they are in the body. We must continue the discussion, then, in order to consider, as it may seem to deserve, this difficult question. It is, in our opinion, to be looked on as an appended inquiry, rather than as an essential question for theology. Still it is not wanting either in practical or speculative importance, and, at any rate, is at present much in dispute.

B. A RELATED QUESTION.

What is the fate of those millions to whom Christ is not made known in this life, and of those generations who lived before the advent of Christ?

This may, perhaps, be only a temporary question. The time may come, we think *will* come, when all will hear the messages of the gospel during the earthly lifetime, and will know the gospel so thoroughly that knowledge and corresponding opportunity will be decisive. Then there will be less occasion for perplexity, as there will be no apparent exclusion from those opportunities which at present are given to only part of the great human family.

The question we have raised is not new. Nor are any of the proposed answers new, although some of the reasoning is the outcome of a more profound thought of the gospel than has been gained in preceding periods. An instructive lesson for impressing the difficulty of our inquiry is a history of the various opinions which have been held during the Christian centuries by honored leaders and revered saints; such an historical sketch, for example, as Dean Plumptre gives in his recent book entitled "*The Spirits in Prison.*" No answer which has yet been given is entirely free from objections. Every one, unless he declines to accept any solution, has an alternative before him, and must rest in that conclusion which seems to him most nearly in accordance with the large meaning of the gospel, and which is exposed to the fewest serious objections. Certainly any one should be slow to condemn those whose opinions on this vexed subject do not agree with his own hypothesis. There is no explicit revelation as to the destiny of those who on earth have had no knowledge of Christ. Therefore any inference that is drawn from the doctrines of the gospel, and from the interpretation of incidental allusions of Scripture, must be held with confession of some remaining ignorance on the part of the reasoner. The theory which we shall advance presently is offered under these conditions.

The answers which have thus far been proposed may be reduced to three, the first of which is held

by only a few, while current opinion is for the most part divided between the other two.¹

1. The first theory is that the heathen are hopelessly lost unless they have the gospel in its historic form during their life on earth. This is maintained both from fact and from supposed necessity. It being assumed that there is no opportunity of repentance after death, facts are pointed to as conclusive, for as matter of notorious knowledge the heathen are universally corrupt, and die in their sins. Thus Professor Kellogg, in his article on *Future Probation*, printed in the "Presbyterian Review" for April last, distinctly says: "Whether this be true" (that the Spirit of God may renew the hearts of men who have never heard of Christ), "we greatly doubt; never among the heathen have we ever met or heard of one meeting any person who gave evidence of being born again before that they had heard the gospel." The final condemnation of all heathen is also argued as of necessity. The argument may be reduced to this form: there is no salvation except through Christ; the heathen have no knowledge of Christ; therefore the heathen are to be cast into hell. Thus the article which we have just quoted contains also the following declaration: "The plain teaching of the Holy Scrip-

¹ The opinion that this question presents insuperable difficulty, and that we may trust the wise and merciful God to do what is right, presents, of course, no answer to be considered, since it is only a confession of ignorance. In the last section of the book the agnostic position is briefly noticed.

tures is that while the heathen have not from the light of nature light enough to save them, they do have enough to condemn them." That is, if the language means what it says, it is impossible for any of the heathen to escape from a sinful state, but nevertheless they all are condemned to everlasting woe, on account of their sins. They need not have been as sinful as they are, although they must have been sinful in their essential character, and for this additional sin, which even with the light they have they might have avoided, they are lost for ever and ever.

This theory is a terrible impeachment of the divine goodness, not to say justice. Is it like God to deal thus with men? Will He leave them in their sins, without any possible means of salvation? The most inconsequent reasoning which leads to some other conclusion is preferable to the inexorable logic, if it be logic, which pushes on to this heartless, unchristian view. We do not wonder that the writer we have quoted falls back on the sovereignty of God. He argues that it is incomprehensible to us why the offers of grace are withheld from a large portion of the race. God has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and we have no right to interpose our curious inquiries. But the very question at issue is precisely this, whether God does withhold the offers of grace from any of his wandering children. It is not denied that the heathen are wicked and blameworthy, that they are much worse than they need to be, that they are

guilty before God to a very large degree, that the displeasure of God is upon them, but it is denied that God condemns men eternally for being in a state of sin from which they have no power of escape. Missions can no longer be inspired by a motive springing from such considerations. The heathen, it used to be said, are hopelessly lost unless they have the gospel before they die. This awful impeachment of the God of grace, who so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son for its salvation, cannot be sustained. This cannot be the whole truth. We must find some other answer, or at least must conclude that we are in possession of only part of the facts. There is enough to inspire missions without resorting to a motive which is contrary to our best conceptions of God, and is opposed to the Christian sentiment which is the outgrowth of the gospel. We cannot trust ourselves to characterize a theory which would consign millions of mankind to everlasting woe only for fear that some triflers in Christian lands should fancy they could defer till after death their repenting and believing. It is enough to say that this theory is fast disappearing from all branches of the Christian church, although the article we have referred to is given a place in a Presbyterian quarterly, and is indorsed with unqualified approbation in the columns of a Congregational review.¹ We do not believe that the editors of the "Presbyterian Review" could agree in accepting,

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1885, pp. 573-575.

nor that clergymen of the Presbyterian Church could concur in maintaining the view that "while the heathen have not from the light of nature light enough to save them, they do have enough to condemn them." This theory is only a restatement of the doctrine of arbitrary election and reprobation.

We turn, then, to the theories which remain, and which find a larger number of adherents. One of these theories is that salvation is possible without any knowledge of the gospel, and yet by reason of the gospel; the other, that saving knowledge of the gospel may be given after death to those who in this life do not obtain it.

2. The former of these theories, and the theory which is the second answer we are to consider, while not destitute of support, is obliged to confront some serious objections, practical as well as theoretical. And if, as we shall find, it covers only exceptional cases, the grave problem remains unsolved. The theory attempts to guard the beliefs that salvation is possible without knowledge of the gospel, and that it is thus possible during the earthly life. In addition, it is maintained by some that this salvation, although obtained without knowledge of the gospel, is essentially by means of the gospel. We must take space and patience to ascertain how much this theory accomplishes towards a satisfactory explanation of the difficulty before which it stands.

Appeal is taken to facts. A few exceptional individuals, scattered among the mass of heathen,

seem to show that salvation is possible without knowledge of the gospel. Socrates, Cato, Aurelius, Buddha, and others seem to have had the characteristics of Christians. A pure and lofty personage is occasionally found among the unchristian peoples to-day who, we cannot help thinking, is accepted of God. Such facts Scripture confirms, it is maintained. In every nation, says the apostle Peter, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. The account of judgment given by Matthew leaves the impression that some, because they were humane and benevolent, are saved, although they did not know their service was really to Christ. Also, it is argued, and with justice, before the time of Christ, Abraham and multitudes of his descendants were saved by faith, and, of course, without knowledge of Christ. These considerations would seem to establish the possibility of salvation without knowledge of the gospel, and to show that the workings of God's grace are not limited to the revelation made in Christ.

It should not be forgotten, however, that these are exceptional cases. The possibility of salvation under these conditions seldom becomes reality. The vast majority of the heathen die in sin. Paul, as Professor Kellogg clearly shows, does not admit the exceptions, but declares that all the heathen are under condemnation. The great apostle admits that if they were righteous they would be approved of God, but is careful to state that as matter of fact they are not obedient; that all have sinned and

come short of the glory of God. It has also been held very generally that the exceptional personages, if there are any, are probably brought after death to knowledge of Christ. Socrates, it has often been said, would have been a Christian if he had known of Christ. It has been supposed that the exceptional virtuous characters were peculiarly receptive of Christ, and probably after death had for their completion the knowledge which was lacking while they were on earth. Plato has often been represented as meeting Christ and worshiping Him in the world of spirits. The view, when it is thus enlarged, seems to be that some at death are still capable of redemption, and that they will not fail of it, but will have the knowledge which is necessary to salvation, a view not essentially unlike that which will be presently considered. A great multitude not so blameless as Socrates and Buddha may still be capable of redemption, as, indeed, proves to be the case when the gospel is preached to them during the earthly life. If it is maintained that the number of those who are accepted of God is not small, but that there are many votaries of religion seeking earnestly towards God according to the light they have, and who constitute a better element in every nation, what is really believed is that they are on the way to clearer knowledge, and that they will know God in Jesus Christ. It is not held that no more is necessary and that they will have no further knowledge, but that they will be saved, in the true meaning of salvation,

through the knowledge of Christ. That knowledge, in the nature of the case, will be given after they die.

As to Abraham and his descendants, the instance is clearly exceptional. They had more than the light of nature. They had a special revelation from God concerning his righteousness and mercy. They knew of redemption on condition of penitence and faith. Their knowledge of God, although obscure, was in many respects the knowledge given afterwards more fully by Christ. And, while their salvation proves that knowledge of the historic Christ was not absolutely necessary, still they were recipients of that which was preparatory to the gospel and directly predictive of it. And, besides, it has always been believed that for the completeness of their redemption they had clearer knowledge, after death, of God's love revealed in Christ. It has even been held by some that the patriarchs and prophets waited for their full salvation until Christ had actually appeared on earth to realize the love of God to mankind, somewhat as the early martyrs are represented in the Apocalypse as waiting and praying for the triumphs of the Redeemer, without which they could not be satisfied. It is, indeed, declared that those who were saved under the old covenant received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they apart from us (of the new covenant) should not be made perfect. The instances cited, then, are exceptional — a few virtuous heathen, and they, perhaps, only

receptive of salvation but not actually regenerate, and the Jews who were under a special revelation which was preparatory to Christ, and which the heathen world did not share. To show that there are many who would accept Christ if they knew him is not to show that they are saved by the light of nature, but would rather go far to establish the opinion that they will know Christ after they die. From exceptions it is not satisfactory to argue to general conclusions. The practical difficulty remains, after all exceptions are admitted, that the light of nature does not suffice for salvation in any comparison with the light of the gospel: that the religions of the world, in the very broadest view, must be looked on only as preparatory to the gospel: that as matter of fact the heathen die in their sins, condemned indeed for much sin they might have avoided, but yet practically without the means of salvation from a sinful state. If this possibility, so seldom realized, is a satisfactory solution of the dark problem, it will, of course, be admitted that their probation is limited to this life. If this is all that God in his love and righteousness does for a large and thus far the vastly larger portion of the race and yet gives the gospel to others, then, certainly, he offers to them all he has to offer while they are in the body. In apparent inconsistency with this view, its advocates are sometimes heard saying that God will do all that can be done for the salvation of every one of his children.

For practical purposes this explanation is not

much better than that which preceded it. According to either view, the immense majority of men die in their sins without hope of salvation. The only advantage of the theory that salvation is possible under the light of nature is that it is not quite as difficult to vindicate the divine justice in condemning those who are disobedient. But the ground gained is scarcely appreciable, and, besides, we have reason to believe that God's dealings with men will vindicate his goodness and mercy as well as his strict justice. Indeed, justice, as was pointed out in the discussion of the Atonement, is the guardian of all the attributes, and therefore does not pronounce the first, but rather the final, word.

But this theory is still further attenuated to mean that the knowledge under which it is possible for men to be saved who never hear of Christ is "essentially" knowledge of the gospel. There is no essential difference, it is said, between the knowledge of duty and therefore of God, which reason and conscience give, and the knowledge of duty and of God which the gospel gives. It is argued that the mutual relations of men in society make obligatory the law of love to man, and inferentially of love to God, and that the gospel gives no other law, even if it enunciates that law more clearly; that therefore conscientious heathen, living up to the knowledge they have, are actually saved through Christ and his atonement, although they have no knowledge of the actual Christ, nor of his sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Now, this reasoning, if it may so be called, is evidently resorted to in order to make the theory agree with the accepted view that salvation from sin and reconciliation to God are possible only through Christ. It is indeed true, but that is not what this explanation means, that God's relation to the entire race in all the generations is other than it would be but for Christ. A race into which Christ is incorporated is not dealt with by God as it would be otherwise. Thus, while the work of Christ was not as yet accomplished, God exercised forbearance for the sins of the past. It is also true that the great religions are suited to prepare the way for Christianity in some such sense as Judaism was related to the gospel. God, we believe, is educating all the nations towards the gospel. But the theory we are considering is of quite another sort. It is that the knowledge gained by reason and conscience is practically equivalent to the knowledge gained through the gospel; not as clear, but the same; less advantageous, but really identical. It is true enough that Christianity is harmonious with reason, and commends itself to the rational and moral convictions. It is also certain that so much truth concerning God as reason can discover is an essential part of Christianity. But because the less is part of the greater it is not therefore essentially the same. Christianity is a source of knowledge concerning God which is not given by the external universe nor by the constitution of man, but only by Christ. Because reason

comprehends this larger revelation when it is given, it does not follow that reason is capable of discovering unaided the truths which are made known only in the gospel of Christ. This extension of the theory we decidedly oppose. From its premises some of the most mischievous and dangerous oppositions to Christ have proceeded. It certainly has no special claim as being sound and orthodox. We consider it unevangelical and rationalistic, for it disparages the importance and denies the necessity of historical Christianity. It is perilously akin, in its postulates, to the Deism of the last century, which maintained that the knowledge of reason and the commands of conscience are sufficient, and which held Christianity to be not a supernatural redemption, but only a superior system of moral teaching. If the knowledge of the heathen is essentially Christianity, then Christianity, essentially, is little more than the knowledge of right and wrong, and all that men need is a clear knowledge of that which is morally obligatory. But Christianity is both superior and distinctive. The gospel not only admits, but assumes and insists that men know the difference between right and wrong. The ethical teaching of Christianity, therefore, is not unlike other codes of ethics, except as it is more clearly and comprehensively enunciated, and more beautifully exemplified in the life of Jesus. What men lack is not the knowledge, but the power of goodness. The gospel comes to men who know the right but are in bondage under sin

and exposed to the necessary consequences ; and it is a power of deliverance from sin, the power of a new life. The gospel, therefore, is not so much something taught as something done ; a great divine work wrought out in actual history, under the knowledge and power of which men are brought into a new and holy life. Christianity is not an ethics, but a redemption. It is not man seeking God by the obscure light of reason and the promptings of conscience, which is the search of men in all the idolatries of heathendom, but it is God seeking man in the person and atoning work of Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. Jesus said to Nicodemus that the need of moral renewal is well known without a revelation, that it is a thing of earthly knowledge. But man could never know by reason or conscience the heavenly thing that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That God realizes his love in Jesus Christ, and energizes through Him for the redemption of sinners, is the gospel, and this is not “ essentially ” the same as the groping of men after God, who has not so revealed himself unto them. This dangerous theory puts the gospel on a level with other religions, and gives it a precarious position. Reduced to a syllogism, the theory may be summarized thus : Men cannot be saved except through Christ and his gospel ; men can be saved who never heard of Christ and his gospel ; therefore, the knowledge men have by na-

ture is really the gospel of which they never heard. The major premiss is almost universally accepted. It is Professor Kellogg's postulate, and it is also ours. But the proposition which has been slipped in under the guise of a minor premiss is really a flat contradiction of the major, while the conclusion is far out on the road in company with forms of unbelief which were long ago driven out in defeat and shame.

Has it come to this, that within evangelical circles the battle must be fought again on the old issue between natural and revealed religion? Must our brethren, "whom we love while we deplore their error," again be held back from accepting the opinion that Christianity is only a system of moral teaching? Evidently the theory, in this form of it, is open to serious objection, since it threatens to undermine the foundations of the gospel, by ignoring its distinctive character as a redemption from sin.

Apart also from the tendency of this rationalistic theory to reduce Christianity from its unique position, the practical result apparently would be to "cut the nerve of missions," for the theory is, first, that the heathen can be saved without the gospel, and, second, that they already have the gospel, — essentially. Therefore, while it may be desirable and commendable to send the gospel with its clearer light, no imperative necessity is laid on the church to proclaim Christ to the heathen.

We think it will be admitted that no one would

dream of saying that the heathen have the gospel in any real sense unless he must think so in order to escape some other conclusion which he has beforehand determined to reject, no matter what violence is done to reason, and even to a correct conception of Christianity, to say nothing of common sense. Who, contemplating the heathen on the one hand as they really are, and pondering the divine and saving significance of the gospel on the other hand, believes that in any practical or even intelligible sense the heathen have the gospel? It would be better to take refuge in a confession of absolute ignorance, or to hide in the ambiguity of "uncovenanted mercies."

We have dwelt at some length on this theory, partly because it is just now somewhat in vogue, and also because those who hold it denounce in severe terms others who are better satisfied with a different explanation. We do not deny liberty to any one to entertain this opinion, although it seems to us foreign to the most obvious characteristics of the gospel, because we admit the problem to be a dark and difficult one, at the best; but we cannot refrain from expressing surprise that the adherents of a view which is manifestly open to grave objections and serious inconsistencies should be horrified at others who do not happen to agree with them in reference to a question which has always been perplexing, and to which no answer yet given is entirely free from objections.

This theory has little advantage over that first

noticed. According to that, the heathen *must* be lost. According to this, it has to be admitted that the overwhelming majority *are* lost. A possibility which does not rise into any appreciable realization fails to remove the difficulty. When this possibility is still further reduced by the attempt to prove that it is the gospel in another form, earnest inquiry is almost insulted. Such explanation increases the perplexity which it pretends to relieve. We are still confronted by the problem. Is there any other hypothesis which affords light? Can no more be said than that God will do what is right, and we must leave all in his hands? Have we no reason to expect, in this life, a more definite explanation?

3. The conclusion which most naturally suggests itself is that those who do not know of God's love in Christ while they are in the body will have knowledge of Christ after death. This answer certainly has the merit of simplicity and intelligibility. If it is true, then every one will have a real knowledge of the gospel, and at the day of judgment will be approved or condemned in view of his acceptance or rejection of Christ, who, either before or after death, but before the final judgment, had been made known as the Redeemer from sin. There would still remain the mystery of that freedom which makes it possible to reject Christ, a mystery which remains on any supposition, but there would be relief in the thought that no one will perish without clear and sufficient knowledge

of the Saviour. But the apparent obviousness of this conclusion may be a reason for suspecting it. And we certainly have to inquire if it does not involve other difficulties so serious that it is better to attempt no solution whatever, but again to confess ignorance.

This theory is opposed for two reasons. It is said to be destitute of Scriptural sanction, and to be unsafe. We must consider, then, such passages of Scripture as relate to our question, and afterwards notice what may be called the prudential objections.

It is urged that Scripture not only does not sustain, but that it is clearly opposed to the theory. It is to be noted on this point that the passages which have a direct bearing are very few, that those which are used inferentially are about equally balanced, as many looking one way as the other, and that there is wide diversity of opinion concerning the interpretation of all the passages in question. Professor Kellogg may be trusted to have collected all the passages which he thinks are decisive as against the theory we are now considering. After diligent search we can discover only two such passages in his article, nor have we ever been able to discover others in the New Testament which can even be claimed as unequivocal.

One is the reminder of the apostle to the Corinthians that before the judgment seat of Christ they will receive the things done in the body. But this passage is limited in its reference to those who have heard the gospel, and it is not legitimate to

stretch it to a universal application. This limitation has the sanction of eminent scholars, and is admitted by some who reject the idea of future probation for the heathen. The passage, then, is not decisive. Singularly enough Professor Kellogg does not use it in that portion of his article which deals with our specific question, but in the more general discussion of a probation for all men. It is worthy of remark that no other passage distinctly refers to the bodily life in relation to judgment.

The only other passage which is claimed as explicit and decisive is in the second chapter of Romans, where Paul says that as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law. But even this statement, direct as it seems, is found in the midst of a discussion the aim of which is to show that all men have absolute need of the gospel; that for Gentile and Jew alike there is no hope apart from the gospel; that all men by reason of their sins are shut up to the gospel; that the nations left to themselves would perish; having not the law they would perish notwithstanding, as the Jews having the law would perish notwithstanding. The apostle was describing the actual present condition of Gentiles and Jews, to show that there is universal need of the gospel. And at the end of the same sentence he affirms that all men at last are to be judged "according to my gospel by Jesus Christ." What is clear is the apostle's teaching that there is no salvation except through the gospel of Christ. It is not as clear, it is indeed doubtful,

if he was thinking of the limits of time within which the gospel might be presented.

We have reached the end so far as passages are concerned which are claimed to have immediate relation to our inquiry. Every one must judge whether these verses, taken separately or together, are so unequivocal as to establish the certainty that there is no hope for the heathen after death. There remain passages which are employed inferentially. Some of these look one way and some the other, and they are few at the most.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is not in point; if for no other reason, because Dives and his brethren had Moses and the prophets. They had the exceptional advantages of the revelation made to the Jews. They were not heathen.

The case of Cornelius is more pertinent, inasmuch as he was a Gentile, and is said to have been acceptable to God before he had the gospel. But if not a Jewish proselyte, he was so impressed by his knowledge of Judaism that he contributed liberally for its support. The history of the man is related to show how Peter was convinced that the gospel would find reception among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews. Above all, it was of the utmost importance that the gospel should be preached to Cornelius, who when he had believed on Christ was a very different man from Cornelius without Christ.

Paul's question in the tenth chapter of Romans, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they

have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher," is appealed to by Professor Kellogg as showing that "if the heathen are to be saved, they must hear of Christ from the living preacher." He argues that Paul was not thinking of "missionary work in Hades." Probably not. But can it be claimed that Paul was doing more than to state the conditions of salvation? In order to be saved, men must have actual knowledge of Christ. Paul's inquiry, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard," at any rate seems fatal to the theory of salvation through the essential Christ as distinguished from the historical Christ. It is a remote inference from his urgency to carry the gospel to living men that those who die without knowledge of Christ are hopelessly lost.

A passage which seems to bear strongly on this question is that in the ninth chapter of Hebrews, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment;" but if it means that death, as we believe, is a great crisis, it seems to mean also that judgment is the other great crisis for every man. It is silent concerning the period between death and judgment.

We have now come to the end of passages used inferentially as against the theory under consideration. That there are no more, and that there are few also to favor the theory, is what might be expected, inasmuch as the Bible is naturally occupied with those, and addresses itself to those to whom its gospel is given, but does not discuss the con-

dition of those to whom it is not given. The Bible is practical rather than speculative.

What, now, are the passages which are thought to give encouragement to hope for the heathen?

One of these passages is Peter's allusion in the third chapter of his epistle to Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison. The preponderating conclusion of scholarship is that Christ appeared in the abode of the dead between his crucifixion and resurrection. That his message was other than the gospel, least of all that it was an exultant condemnation of the lost, we find it impossible to believe. The inference is natural, though not necessary, that if Christ preached to the contemporaries of Noah, the wickedest of former generations, his gospel is also made known to the heathen nations who have had even less than the warnings of Noah. The belief of the ancient church, a belief which has held its ground till the present time, that Christ descended into Hades, is a legitimate inference from Peter's teaching, taken in connection with Paul's parenthetical question in the fourth chapter of Ephesians, "Now this, he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens."

Even more significant is 1 Peter iv. 5, 6: "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live ac-

according to God in the spirit." Here it is expressly taught that, in order to make the judgment universal, the gospel was preached to all the dead as well as to the living. There is the identical connection of thought which we have indicated. Judgment by Christ is preceded by the preaching of the gospel to the living and the dead. The passage is unequivocal. It can no longer be maintained that the dead referred to are the spiritually dead, or that any others are meant than all the dead of former generations. Both the fifth and the sixth verses have the same general application to all the dead. And the very object of preaching the gospel to them is that they might be judged in the way according to which all men are judged in respect to the life in the flesh, but might yet in the way characteristic of God have opportunity to live in the spirit. The interpretation of Professor Kellogg that the preaching to the dead was to the martyrs who are now dead but who heard the gospel when alive is too fanciful to deserve serious consideration.

Another passage is that in the gospels concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come. These words of Jesus do not affirm that any sins will be forgiven in the world which is to come; but the inference is natural from his solemn declaration that the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in the world to come, that other sins may be forgiven hereafter. And, inasmuch as this sin is generally thought to be no

other than the willful rejection of Christ, the inference is still more natural. It is possible, however, that Christ meant only to speak strongly, and was employing an "emphasized negative." Professor Kellogg argues that the world to come was, in the opinion of the Jews, to begin with the resurrection, and that Christ had no reference to an age between death and resurrection, but to an age following the intermediate state. If we correctly understand this explanation, the inference would be that all sins can be forgiven all the way on up to the resurrection; that is, in this age or world; and possibly, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, in the period which is ushered in by and follows the resurrection. This explanation the professor esteems better and more precisely pertinent to the present issue than the "emphasized negative" theory, or the "turning rhetoric into logic" theory.

Again, if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon are to be condemned to everlasting woe, in what sense can their judgment be more tolerable than that of Chorazin and Bethsaida? If Sodom, with the knowledge of Christ, would not have been overthrown, and if Tyre and Sidon would have repented, can we believe that the knowledge of Christ will forever be withheld from them? And is it certain that our Lord had in mind more than the temporal calamities to which those cities had been exposed by reason of their sins? Was he thinking of the everlasting destiny of all the individuals who dwelt in them?

In more than one place Christ is spoken of as the Lord of the living and the dead, as if his power is not absent from the abodes of the dead.

The only remaining passage is the account in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where judgment is based on humane and benevolent works, — such as feeding the hungry and visiting the sick. It would seem to favor the second theory, especially the form of it which argues for the essential Christ. But some suppose that all those there described must have had the knowledge of Christ, since they at that time know who He is; others, that their surprise is in seeing that many works they had done were really for Christ; others, that saving faith expresses itself in conduct; but Professor Kellogg has relieved us from the necessity of explaining the passage, for he is positive it is not an account of the general judgment, but only of the judgment of those who at the time of the second coming of Christ will be found living, and that all these will have had the gospel preached to them.

We do not recall any other passages pertinent to our inquiry, either directly or indirectly. Inferences from the resurrection of Lazarus and of the widow's son, and from their subsequent opportunities, have always appeared to us very shadowy.

In admitting that there are few specific passages which relate to the subject, we would not imply that Scripture does not strongly support our position, but only that few passages are found which make explicit statements. But is any teaching of the

Bible more unmistakable than that the world to its every individual is to be judged by Christ, and that Christ was offered for the sins of the whole world? The Scriptures plainly teach the universality of Christ's work in its intent, its application, and its consummation. The burden of proof, even on the Scriptural side, rests upon those who aver that any portion of the race is excluded from the privileges of the gospel. It is not incumbent on us to quote Scripture which shall show that the heathen *do* have the gospel before they are judged. It is incumbent on those who oppose our view to quote Scripture which shall show that the heathen *do not* have the gospel before they are judged. But even in view of specific passages, although they are few, we claim that no one of them is decisive against the hope which may be entertained for the heathen, while there are others, especially those in the epistle of Peter, which may fairly be claimed to favor that hope.

The objections which are urged most strenuously against the hypothesis of future probation for the heathen are prudential. The consequences of such a hope are held to be dangerous. If it is admitted, so the argument runs, that there are any who may have opportunity after death, will not the hope be encouraged that some in Christian lands will also have such opportunity? Many are ready to say that they have not had a fair chance here; and as men are so prone to delay, they will be more secure than ever. We do not deny that there is

force in this consideration. Such misuse might be made of the breadth of the gospel. Men defer repentance for various insufficient reasons, presuming too much on the mercy of God, or on the more convenient season. But we do not accept this objection as conclusive against the theory. It is difficult to judge of the usefulness of a particular belief. No one can tell how many are hardened against the gospel because the opinion has been advanced that all the heathen are hopelessly lost. Perhaps the harm done by encouraging delay would be more than offset by the harm done through narrow conceptions of the love of God. It is certain that many have been prejudiced against the gospel by representations of God which make Him a severe and tyrannical Sovereign. It is certain that conscientious, intelligent men have shrunk from identifying themselves with a church and from embracing a religion whose God leaves the vast majority of the race without opportunity of salvation. There is danger on both sides, and it is impossible to decide on which side it is greater.

Another prudential objection is that the motive of missions is weakened. Urgency to send the gospel abroad will be reduced, if it is believed that the heathen can be saved after death. We deny that this is the main motive of missions. Christ's command is explicit and urgent. The glory of his kingdom requires the propagation of the gospel. But it is a question which has not been sufficiently considered, what the effect is likely to be with the

heathen themselves, if this or that opinion is held. The regard of the heathen in many nations for ancestors is known to be almost their religion. Who is prepared to say that it would be safer to tell the Chinese and Japanese that there is no hope for any of their ancestors, than to admit or even teach that in other worlds the same Christ may be offered to them who is offered now to their descendants? The gospel is not limited to the Western nations. Christianity is to be Asiatic and African, as well as European and American. God's dealing with the nations which have long been in darkness is not determined by the false hopes which some who have heard the gospel all their lives may cherish, and which they all the time know are not well founded. We do not consent to argue the question on prudential grounds. These reasons have been mentioned only to show how inconclusive they are, and that there is much to be said on both sides from any such point of view.

To escape from a dilemma, it is surmised by some that, not after death, but at the moment of death, clearer knowledge may be obtained. It is urged that at that supreme moment the veil of flesh no longer obscures, and a sudden illumination may be vouchsafed. Perhaps this is true, though such indications as are given do not show that the mind is usually active at the moment of dissolution. But this hypothesis is open to all the prudential objections which are urged against enlightenment after death. If it is believed that at death knowledge is

clearer and motive stronger, men will wait for so favorable an opportunity. If the heathen at death will or may receive knowledge which they do not have before, the urgency of missions is reduced quite as surely as if it is thought such knowledge will be given after death. This hypothesis also lacks the least vestige of Scriptural support.

Our view is, then, that God will reveal himself in Christ to all men. Those who have the gospel while they are in the body are in the decisive period. Neither Scripture nor the observed tendency of character to become permanently fixed, especially under the gospel, afford any reason to hope that a more favorable, or, indeed, any opportunity will be given after death. But for those who do not know God in Christ during the earthly life, it seems to us probable that the knowledge they need will be given after death. At the same time we are not as positive concerning the times, seasons, or circumstances under which God will reveal himself in Christ, as we are that the principle is of universal application : that no man will be finally judged till he knows God in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and that no man will be hopelessly condemned except for the willful and final rejection of Christ. The sin against the Holy Ghost, which is thought to be that hostility to Christ which makes one incapable of redemption, is the only sin for which we are explicitly told there is no forgiveness in any world or age.

If it is said that it is useless to present Christ to

many of the heathen because they are so corrupt that they would not accept Him, it must be replied that no one can be sure of that; that the same could be said of many in Christian lands; that it would amount to believing that the gospel is presented in earnest only to those who are sure to accept it; and that this view is either Universalism on the one side, or the old doctrine of arbitrary election and reprobation on the other. Our belief is, that somewhere and sometime God will reveal himself to every one in the face of Jesus Christ, and that the destiny of each and all is determined by the personal relation to Christ. If we did not believe this, Christianity would no longer be for us the universal religion, and the teaching that Christ is Son of Man, the universal man, the Head of humanity, would be robbed of its significance.

That man even in another world can refuse the proffers of grace is in accordance with that freedom and responsibility which are always and everywhere both the glory and mystery of rational, moral being, and which create no greater perplexity of thought in the case of the rejection of Christ after death than in the case of the rejection of Christ before death.

It is customary to argue from the present existence of sin and evil in the world to the probability that it may continue forever, and that some may be lost who never had even the opportunity of salvation. How, it is asked, can we reconcile it with the goodness of God that He should create a world

in which sin and suffering should be present for ages? How, then, can we decide any of these dark questions from our opinion of what God might be expected to do? We submit that the argument is irrelevant. If sin is at length to disappear entirely, there would be mental relief, and its existence now would not be so mysterious. The temporary presence of sin presents no such problem as the everlasting presence of sin. The argument is one of the weakest to bring against the doctrine of universal restoration. So if the heathen, at present corrupt and ignorant, are at length to be enlightened and to have space for repentance, the problem is entirely different from that which confronts us on the supposition that from their very birth they are doomed to everlasting woe. The existence of sin, which cannot be escaped nor overcome, is infinitely more perplexing to thought than the existence of sin from which redemption is to be made possible. That God permits sin at all is indeed mysterious, but the mystery darkens if the majority of the race can never by any possibility be delivered from it.

It may be thought by some that the question we have been discussing is not of the first importance. And it is true that, taken by itself, apart from the principles to which it is related, it cannot be considered one of the fundamental questions. That is to say, one's opinion concerning the opportunities of the heathen after death is of secondary consequence as compared with his opinion concerning the Person of Christ and other cardinal doctrines.

It is also admitted that on the practical side it should not have the prominence of other subjects. The preacher of the gospel has little or no occasion to argue his opinion publicly. When the gospel is actually presented it is urgent for immediate acceptance with those whom it addresses. In preaching there is almost no occasion to debate with hearers the prospects of those less fortunate than themselves. But the opinion one has on this subject is of great consequence, when it is considered as an indication of his conception of the gospel of Christ. Even the preacher, from whose serious functions this apparently speculative question seems remote, is affected in the tone, the breadth, the influence of his preaching by the thought he has of the extent and significance of God's love to men as it is revealed in Christ. And for the theologian, indeed for every one who ponders deeply God's gracious dealings with sinful men, it makes a vast difference whether he holds that cruel conception of God which means that vast multitudes of his children can by no possibility be saved, or that narrow conception of God which means that the gospel is little more than the light of the unaided reason of misguided men, or that conception of God which recognizes the universality of the gospel of redemption and the supreme significance of the final judgment, and which means that God will not withhold from any of his children that knowledge and motive which alone are able to save them from their sins.

We do not think it necessary, therefore, to claim

liberty in holding our opinion as among the opinions which have been advanced, inasmuch as this opinion finds more support than contradiction from Scripture, makes the gospel universal in fact, no longer leaving that enormous exception which thus far includes the large majority of mankind, and which restores to its complete value the significance of judgment through Christ. We both demand liberty to hold it, and decline to admit superior orthodoxy on the part of those who hold another opinion, which is open to the most serious theoretical and practical objections. We are unable to discover any more piety in representing God as a Being who creates millions of men to whom He never offers the means of salvation, than in representing God as a Being who will bring all men to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The vital issue of the day, old and yet ever new, is an issue beside which the question we have been considering seems to be of secondary importance, yet with which it is closely related. The real issue is between Christianity as a supernatural redemption and mere naturalism. Can Christianity be maintained at the point where its adherents place it? Can the doctrine be made good that Christ is a revelation from God, and the supreme, final, universal revelation? Is he more than Jesus of Nazareth, the teacher and founder of one religion among many religions? Can all the attempts that are made to reduce the significance of the Person and work of Christ be successfully resisted? Do we

stand on firm ground in passing over from the Jesus of history to the Christ of faith? The movement of Christian thought with which we sympathize signifies, in its deepest meaning, the exaltation of Jesus Christ as the Head of humanity, the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, the Mediator of God to the whole universe. For us He is all this, or else He is in no peculiar sense sent of God, and we have no gospel of redemption. We have accepted one side of the great alternative, with all it may involve. We believe Him to be the Redeemer of mankind, the Lord of the living and the dead, the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance. As a corollary from this belief, we are confident that all members of the human family are to know God in Christ. We believe that all the more obscure revelations of God, and all the religions as truly as the religion of the Hebrews, have been an education of the nations preparatory to the clear, glorious, and potent revelation of God in Christ. We believe that the Biblical representations of the final judgment by Christ and of the triumphant consummation of the redemptive kingdom mean that the end is not reached till all mankind, the least and the greatest, the wisest and the most ignorant, the purest and the most depraved, have the knowledge of God's amazing love in Jesus Christ our Lord. We should be content to expend our toil of thought, our debate and contention on the great principles of the gospel; to be intent and constant in honoring our

divine and human Redeemer and in persuading men of the supremacy, authority, efficacy, and universality of his gospel of redemption. But since the issue has been joined on the question which is at present so warmly debated, we are willing to meet it at that point, and to go back from the corollary to the principle, from a single application to those central truths of Christianity in the light of which only can the question receive a sufficient and a complete answer.

The question back of all is as old as the gospel itself. It was first asked by our Lord when He inquired, "Who do men say that the SON OF MAN is?" As of old the answer has been insufficient. One of the prophets, an Elijah, a Jeremiah, one sent to a favored part, but to only a part of this sinful world. The Master's searching question comes closer: "But who say *ye* that I am?" The answer was in the question as He first asked it. He is the SON OF MAN.

V.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE mystery, which attaches to the name and attends the operations of the Holy Spirit, seems to some minds to preclude any attempt to determine or even to place his work in its relation to historic Christianity. Other minds, we conceive, prefer to leave the whole subject in mystery in the supposed interest of "the larger hope." The unknown is easily made to cover vast possibilities of mercy. Given a power like that of the Holy Ghost, and who may venture to put any limitations upon the divine intercourse with man, the divine incentives to his repentance, or the divine forgiveness? Who may affirm that God is not at work in some real and effective way for the salvation of men irrespective of their knowledge of the Atonement? Nay, who can assert that the manifestation of the Spirit is not as truly a revelation of God, and therefore as efficacious in human salvation, as the disclosure of his nature and love in the person of Jesus Christ? What warrant have we for attaching supreme importance to the revelation of God in Christ?

These questions, which are presented as they

have been offered to us, reveal a tendency on the part of some to find in the greatness and mystery of the work of the Holy Spirit an equivalent for what is known as historic Christianity, thereby avoiding the necessity of insisting upon the offer of Christ to all men. Many of those who represent this tendency would prefer, we are persuaded, to leave the matter in its large indefiniteness, but the thought naturally seeks definition, and when formulated it takes some such expression as this. Regeneration, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, is the moral result and test of salvation. A regenerate life is a saved life, because it shows correspondence with God and likeness to Him in character. But regeneration can take place without the knowledge of the Atonement. It is enough that the Atonement has been made and is known to God. The Atonement is the ground on which God can consistently work in regenerating men through the Holy Spirit.

Whatever may be thought of the reasonableness of this theory, it is evident that it ignores the whole effect of Christianity as a motive, and therefore raises at once the question: What is the evidence that such a work is going on among men independently of the moral force and persuasions of the Gospel? What are the signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his regenerating power throughout heathendom? Some of those who urge this theory have given us their observations upon heathen communities; and these observations have been ad-

duced to show that character in those communities is rapidly attaining final permanence in evil. Do the facts of heathendom, with or without this conclusion, justify the theory? If they do not, what is its practical value? And on the other hand, if the facts of heathendom can be made to show a large and sufficient work of the Holy Spirit without the knowledge or use of the life and death of Christ, what is the ground of Christian missions? Why send the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have the gospel of the Holy Spirit?

We have thus far assumed in our interpretation of Progressive Orthodoxy, that Christianity — meaning by it the revelation of God in the life and death of Christ in their moral and sacrificial power — is God's method of salvation for the race. We have not discussed, and do not care to discuss, the possibilities of salvation apart from the divine method. The hope of man is in the power of God. We prefer to know where and how God is at work, where and how the divine energies are going forth in behalf of man according to the divine purpose and choice. The Scriptures, as we believe, disclose one way, a way sufficient and inclusive. They everywhere reveal unity of method in the moral government of God. As we have remarked in the discussion of the Atonement, "There is no evidence whatever that the race is divided into two great sections, one of which is dealt with on the basis of the gospel, and the other on the basis of law and natural conscience — one on a basis of justice, the

other on a basis of grace. As, before Christ came, God exercised forbearance for the sins of the past and because Christ was coming, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, so ultimately all the nations and all the generations are to be dealt with through Him who tasted death for every man."

But unity of method in the salvation of the race demands as its working correlate identity of motive. We say identity rather than equality of motive, for absolute equality would be impossible. So, too, we should prefer to say that motives should be identical rather than equivalent, because the latter term is indefinite and opens endless discussion. Identity of motive requires that the influences which are employed be drawn from the same source and urged by the same agency. Christianity, it is acknowledged, has brought in upon the mind of man a new and distinct class of facts relating to his salvation. But it does not rely upon the bare knowledge of these facts for the accomplishment of its purpose in the salvation of men. It seeks to vitalize them with spiritual power, and make them convictive and persuasive. Christianity, we are to remember, is more than a religion of ways and means: it is a religion of motives. If we accustom ourselves to think of the Gospel as a plan or scheme we must not overlook the power which gives it vitality and makes it efficacious. That power is the Holy Spirit. Historic Christianity presupposes and includes the work of the Holy Spirit, as the work

of the Spirit assumes and rests upon the facts of historic Christianity. The work of Christ and the work of the Spirit are not simply related theological terms; they stand, in the practical development of God's purposes, in the relation of mutual dependence.

For the sake of distinctness we state our position in the following postulates:—

1. The work of the Holy Spirit, as a work in *motive*, fulfills and makes effective the method of salvation proposed by Christianity.

2. Historic Christianity alone offers sufficient *material* in motive, in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, for the natural and efficacious work of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian conception of man is that of man under motives from without working toward his salvation. This is, perhaps, the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. All other religions, it has been said, represent man as seeking God. Christianity alone represents God as seeking man. It will be seen that the principle which is here suggested holds good under the narrowest interpretation of the Christian system. Christianity is the religion of the divine search, whether there be few or many sought after. If we start within the limitations of an arbitrary election we have a limited atonement and a limited work of the Spirit, but even here the prominent fact is that of Christ dying for the elect and the Spirit working for their sal-

vation. Universal atonement comes in to break up the narrowness of the scheme, but it retains and magnifies the principle. It is still Christ dying for men and the Spirit working for their salvation. The two go together and are coextensive. A limited atonement allows only a limited work of the Spirit. A universal atonement necessitates a universal work of the Spirit. Method and motive are inseparable in the range and scope of their action. We emphasize this statement because of the tendency of certain minds to rest in the supposed sufficiency of a universal atonement without a corresponding work of the Spirit. The conditions of the divine grace seem to them to be met and fulfilled in the death of Christ, provided it is understood that his death was for all. Evidently this was not the mind of Christ. Nothing can be plainer than the fact of his reliance for the impression of his work, including his death, upon the power of the Holy Spirit. All his personal expectations, all his promises, all his plans for his church were based upon the bestowal of this power. The forty days which followed his death and resurrection, days of doubt and perplexity to the disciples, and of unbelief with the multitudes, were not because of this days of disappointment to Him. Had He not assured the disciples of the coming in due time of One who should take of his and show it unto them, under whose showing whatever had seemed dark and inexplicable should become plain and bright? Had He not also assured them that He,

who was to make all things clear to them, was to go before them and act through them in the conviction of the world? "And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." It is nowhere affirmed or assumed in the Gospels that the world with unaided vision would discern the cross, or with untroubled heart would seek its reliefs. The cross was yet to be revealed to men in the hidings of its power. When the excitement of the crucifixion had passed away, and the scenes attendant upon it had been forgotten, Jerusalem was to be moved afresh and irresistibly. Another Presence was to be there, unseen, impalpable, but felt, as men feel the wind and fire. Hence the calmness of Christ under the postponement of results. Hence, also, the tone of assurance and triumph which marks his final utterances. The closing pages of John's Gospel brighten and glow under the expectation of the Spirit beyond the pages of the prophets under the hope of the Messiah.

In claiming, as we have done, that the Holy Spirit in his work represents the place of motive in Christianity we do not affirm that his work is irresistible. Man is his own master under Christianity as without. We have no wish to dispute the *dictum* of a past generation that "God governs mind

by motive and not by force." What we wish to affirm and maintain is simply the Scriptural position that Christianity is the religion of motive, a fact of which the presence of the Holy Spirit is the unmistakable sign, and to which his work bears perpetual testimony. And we are the more persuaded to insist upon this position because it is so often practically denied. We are, for example, continually remanded back in present discussions to the question — "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" — as an easy and final settlement of all perplexities. This is a question which Christianity takes up and adopts as its own, and at the proper time asks with a significance which is decisive, but it is not the first question which it asks. It does not have precedence in the order of time. Unless Christianity ignores its very presence in the world, unless it denies the facts of its origin and history, it must present God working through motive before it presents Him sitting in judgment. Christianity itself starts the question, to which it gives precedence, and in answer to which it invites the most earnest thinking, even "high speculation," — What can the God and Father of men, who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, be expected to do for his children before He deals with them in judgment? When this question has been answered, answered in the spirit and according to the logic of Christianity, the answer to the former question comes in place, and becomes simple and final.

In like manner it is beginning to be urged by those who see no necessity, in the interest of grace, for a Christian opportunity for all men, that any lack in opportunity or motive can be made up in leniency of judgment: as if the Christian opportunity and the Christian motive had their moral equivalent in leniency of judgment. An illustration will expose the fallacy of this concession. A man is arrested for stealing. It is proved upon the trial that he was born of a race of thieves, that he was trained in bad associations, that he never had any wholesome restraints or incentives brought to bear upon him. In consideration of these facts the judge foregoes the ordinary sentence, and discharges the prisoner. What is the result? Simply that the man returns to his stealing. The remission of sentence has had no moral effect. Indeed, in such a case, the waiving of judgment might be fairly interpreted to be a confession of previous injustice on the part of society. Judgment, at least as a finality, has no remedial, no educational, power. It produces no ethical result. It leaves character as it finds it. By no possibility, therefore, can the feebleness of judgment be made an equivalent for the use of motive. And when we apply the case to Christianity and consider the motives which it has introduced and the provision which it has made for their enforcement, what can we find with which to compare it in its power to reach and change the human heart? Where shall we look for the equivalent of Christianity?

We have stated our belief that Christianity alone offers sufficient material in motive for the efficacious work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men. We do not deny the presence of motive in the facts of nature. Neither do we deny the agency of the Spirit of God in the use of these facts. Neither do we deny the possibility of direct access on the part of God to the heart and conscience of man. "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." We gratefully accept all evidences of the wide and various work of the Spirit in inspiration. We would not belittle such statements of the Old Testament as that concerning Bezaleel, that he "was filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber." But the position of the New Testament is unmistakable in associating the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men with the work of Christ to the same end. What we know as the dispensation of the Spirit follows and depends upon the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord. The order is not simply that of sequence: it is that of dependence. First the revelation of God in Christ, then, and in consequence, the communication of the life of God through the Spirit. "God manifests himself," says Van Oosterzee, "in the Son, but communicates his life by the Holy Spirit. The Son is the self-revealing God; the Holy Ghost the self-communicating

God." This communication of the divine life in its freeness and fullness follows a like free and full revelation of it. The knowledge of Christ precedes and is necessary to the natural work of the Holy Spirit. Even the personality of the Spirit awaits the personal revelation of Christ. Throughout the Old Testament the Spirit appears chiefly as an influence; in the New Testament He is a person. And the name by which He is there known indicates his special work. He is invariably the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Ghost — a name used but two or three times in the Old Testament. Once within the pages of the New Testament, we no longer read of inspirations like that of Bezaleel. The inspirations of the Holy Spirit pertain to the ministry and Person of Christ. "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me. . . . He shall glorify me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." The offices of the Spirit were to be henceforth associated with sin and redemption. "He will convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." The immediate gifts of the Spirit were such as naturally followed the

incoming of Christianity and attested its power. "To one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom ; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit ; to another faith, in the same Spirit ; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit ; and to another workings of miracles ; and to another prophecy ; and to another discernings of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; and to another the interpretation of tongues ; but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will." And the permanent ministry of the Spirit in the soul was to be that of comfort, hope, assurance in the gospel of Christ. " The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." Now these and kindred passages of the New Testament — there are none which are not kindred with these — point to the same conclusion. They show the relation in time and in effect of the work of the Spirit to the revelation of the person and ministry and death of Christ. As the coming of Christ involved the gift of the Spirit, even to the disclosure of his personality, the designation of his offices, and the assurance of his abiding presence in the world, so the gift of the Spirit seems to us to presuppose the new facts, the new relationships, the new motives, which centre around the Person of Christ. We confess, therefore, our utter inability to under-

stand the meaning of those who say that "the Holy Spirit is the present Christ," or "the essential Christ;" and who, therefore, affirm that every man really has an understanding of Christ and a Christian opportunity. The terms, as used with this inference, seem to us absolutely vague and confusing. They take away at once the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the significance of historic Christianity. To our minds the New Testament teaches, not that the Holy Spirit is a substitute for the personal Christ, not that through his general work He makes amends for the want of knowledge of the work of Christ, but that it is the distinct and glorious office of the Spirit to give efficacy to the life and sacrifice of Christ, as they are brought into direct and conscious relation to men, and to bear witness in the heart, when once Christ has been apprehended by faith, to the reality of the Christian experience.

To be more specific: What is the method of the Holy Spirit in the conviction of sin? Is it not through a crucified and rejected Christ? Is not the cross the background upon which the guilt of the individual life is thrown out? And are not the standards which Christianity sets up in society the very ground and reason for the sense of shame over social sins? What makes the exposure of sin possible? Certainly not the existence of sin, for the more common and revolting the forms of sin may be, the less meaning can be attached to their exposure. There can be no exposure of sin in the heart of Africa, in many of the islands of the sea,

in any of the great centres of heathendom. Exposure is a relative term, and derives its meaning, not from the presence of sin, but from the presence of righteousness. Revelation must precede exposure to make it of avail, to make it possible, — the revelation of holiness, of purity, of love. Society is startled and aroused under the knowledge of great sins, in the form of vices and crimes, in proportion as it is Christian. Christianity, through its revelations of righteousness, brings out those mighty contrasts under which men may carry on the work of exposure. Any man or organization, the press, for example, may expose if the moral conditions are present. The Holy Spirit alone can reveal that righteousness through which sin becomes shameful, and that love through which the sinner becomes a penitent. Very much which passes for conviction of sin is not conviction of sin at all. There is no spiritual power about it. It is simply a natural fear of consequences, immediate or remote. It is a conviction of punishment and not of sin. Conviction by the cross of Christ is conviction of sin. The first and deepest thoughts which it wakens are not of penalty, but of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The spectacle of a righteous sufferer, the mingling of holiness with love, of justice with compassion, which his sufferings exhibit, impresses the conscience — not the imagination, but the conscience — more than the terrors of the law. “There is more law,” says Dr. Bushnell, “in Christ, in his character and life and doc-

trine, than in all statutes besides. . . . The thunders of Sinai are no match for the silent thunders of Calvary." It would greatly simplify our idea of the conviction of sin to remember that there can be no real conviction of sin without a corresponding revelation of righteousness; and, further, that righteousness expressing itself in sacrifice is the most terrible indictment possible of sin and of the sinner. But where can this expression be found outside Christianity? Where in the realm of natural law can the Spirit find material in motive fitted to this most difficult of all tasks — the conviction of sin? And is it not in this union of a holy sufferer for sin with a holy convincer of sin that we have the true solution of the sin against the Holy Ghost? Has not the church judged rightly in identifying this sin with the persistent rejection of Christ against the patient effort of the Holy Spirit? Christianity has introduced a new classification of sins; it has created a new species; it points to the unforgiven, the unpardonable sin. Where can we look for this save in the shadow created by its own light?

And if now we turn to the renewing and transforming work of the Spirit within the soul we find the same direct relation to Christ. As before Christ was the argument, now He is the pattern. The Spirit works toward Christ in the reconstruction of character. It is enough to say of his work that it is in the endeavor to make men over into Christians. The end is actual and manifest like-

ness to Christ. Regeneration thus acquires a large and an exact meaning under Christianity. We would not deny the existence of regenerate life outside Christianity; and as respects the Jewish economy we admit as much in regard to regeneration as in regard to atonement. Everything can be said of the Old Testament saints except that they were Christians. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect." Our contention at this point is that under Christianity the Holy Spirit works in human nature toward a higher, a more definite, and a more available standard. Conformity to law is the despair of the most obedient souls. Likeness to Christ is the reverent ambition of the humblest disciple. There is that about the relation of Christ to men which makes the "imitation" of Him possible. He is the head of the race; we are therefore enjoined to "grow up into him in all things, which is the head." He became incarnate; He was made like unto his brethren; He was tempted in all points like as we are; we are therefore encouraged to appeal to Him for help, assured that we shall "find grace to help in every time of need." He is the second Adam, the restorer of a lost manhood, through whom we may attain a nobler nature and destiny; we are therefore put in confident expectation of the completed work within us. "Behold, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not

yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "And every man," the Apostle most significantly adds, "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Where now, we ask, are there facts and assurances like these, without the range of Christianity, of which the Holy Spirit can take advantage in carrying on the process of regeneration? And how without these can the process be made definite, real, and assuring to the soul of man? If we say the least, we can say no less than that when we pass beyond the method of the conscious renewal of the spiritual life in Christ we pass at once into what is exceptional, vague, and indeterminate.

We will only specify, in further illustration of our position, the renovating work of the Holy Spirit in society. As we have already shown, it is the work of the Spirit in the revelation of righteousness — and of righteousness, as we know, and fear, and love it in the person of Jesus Christ — which makes the common work of the exposure of social sins effective, or even possible. But Christianity offers more than contrasts. It is more than a background for the exhibition of sin. It furnishes the direct material for all progress and for all reforms. Especially through its new conception and new requirements concerning man does it work for the renovation of society and the elevation of the race. Christianity is declaring itself more and more as an organic force. It is entering into every rela-

tion, and diffusing itself through every influence. Sometimes it is destructive, and sometimes constructive, in its results. It has, for example, cast down slavery and built up truthfulness, and by the same principle. "Lie not one to another," says the Apostle, "for ye are members one of another," — an argument which demands truthfulness from man to man; and equally denies the right of the ownership of man in man. In fact, this principle of membership of one in another is the great human principle through which Christianity wages relentless war against all forms of selfishness, whether expressed in greed, or indifference, or untruthfulness. The principle is peculiar to Christianity, and in the application of it through the Spirit God has wrought out the triumphs of the Christian centuries. Here, again, we ask, How could the Spirit of God develop without the aid of Christianity those working principles for the renovation of society, which men would recognize as sufficient, and to which they could surrender themselves with enthusiasm? Christ has made humanity intelligible to itself. He has done more. He has awakened in men the love of man. Nothing can separate or alienate anything which is human from that which is Christian. Christian missions are the witness to the belief of the church in man, and to its love for him, as the corollary from its belief in Christ and its love for Him.

We conclude, then, that the work of the Holy Spirit is distinctively a Christian work; that it

follows in the order of dependence upon the revelation of God in Christ; that it draws its argument from the Person and work of the Redeemer; and that it proceeds from and toward Christ in the renewal of the life of the individual and in the renovation of society.

VI.

THE CHRISTIAN.

THE question is continually recurring as to the legitimacy or propriety of claiming the Christian name and affirming the Christian hope for persons of exceptional character, irrespective of their Christian experience and faith. Some person, Jew or Gentile, becomes conspicuous for his virtues or charities. In the event of his death the questions are quite sure to be put to the Evangelical Church, What do you call this man, and, What of his future? The reply which is made is always according to the dictates of the moral sense. Practically, the Evangelical Church never denies the courtesy of the Christian name or the hospitality of the Christian hope to those whose lives illustrate the Christian virtues. But theologically these "exceptional cases" create no little confusion. The answers which they call out are apt to put a strain upon the theological systems.

The most recent discussion in point has been occasioned by the death of the eminent Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore. In answer to the usual question about the Christian salvation of such a man, Dr. A. A. Hodge writes as follows in "The Independent" of September 17, 1885:—

“In common with all who maintain the integrity of Catholic Christianity, we firmly believe that human nature is radically and universally corrupt and guilty before God, utterly incapable of self help in the way of expiation, of merit, of spiritual renovation. Whenever a human being is found, as a matter of fact, to be reconciled to God, and by a holy life gives evidence of possessing a holy nature, we with perfect confidence attribute the result to the application to the person in question of the expiating virtue of Christ's sacrifice and of the regenerating power of his Spirit. We believe, therefore, that, without exception, the acceptance of each man with God depends, not upon any supposed natural goodness or personal merit, but wholly upon the fact of the man's personal relation to Jesus Christ. . . . The establishment of this personal relation to our Lord, so as to constitute one a beneficiary of his redemption, is generally conditioned upon personal recognition and confession of Him. This is even essential whenever intellectually possible. But it is not absolutely essential, as is proved in the case of those dying in infancy, and of idiots. On like grounds of principle it might hold true in the case of some exceptionally enlightened heathen. The charitable formula of ‘invincible ignorance,’ used and greatly abused by Romanists, rests ultimately upon a true principle, and has always been practically more or less recognized by orthodox Christians.”

The whole communication from which this extract is taken is thoroughly manly in its tone, and is most delightful reading, as a large-hearted interpretation of the Calvinistic symbols in their bearing upon the matter at issue. The difficulty of the

explanation lies in the construction put upon the application of the Atonement. We heartily agree with the writer in his assertion of the necessity of the Atonement to every human being. We thank him for the words, "We believe that, without exception, the acceptance of each man with God depends, not upon any supposed natural goodness or personal merit, but wholly upon the fact of the man's personal relation to Christ." But when it is assumed, as it is throughout this article, that the Atonement can be applied to the individual and made efficacious in his behalf, apart from any appreciable influence upon him, without his personal acceptance of it, without even his knowledge of the fact of an atonement, we draw back from the assumption as beyond the limits of plain reasoning. The assumption carries the Atonement over into the secret councils of the Most High. The cross might as well have been set up in some other world. Historic Christianity becomes a needless expression of the divine purpose and method in the salvation of men. We have elsewhere characterized this kind of salvation, wrought out independently of human consciousness, as salvation by magic.¹ It seems to us to be closely akin to the arts of Ro-

¹ An editorial writer in *The Advance* of November 5, 1885, makes the following reference to the case in question: "Those who maintain this new doctrine" — that of a 'Christian probation for all souls' — "are forbidden by it to say as the rest of the church says: He" — Sir Moses Montefiore — "was saved by Christ because his life was Christlike, though

manism. The case of the "exceptionally enlightened heathen" is compared with that of infants, of whom it is said that it is *proved* that the personal recognition and confession of Christ is not absolutely essential to entitle them to become beneficiaries of his redemption. How proved? The Scriptures say nothing of the method of the salvation of infants. The doctrine of their salvation, if the demand be made for specific proof-texts, is extra-Scriptural. The doctrine is an inference, legitimate and necessary, as we believe, but still an inference from the Christian conception of God. The proof of the inferential character of this belief lies in the historic fact that it is only with the widening of the conception of God that we have the belief in the salvation of all infants. Until we reach the Christian conception of God, we have the salvation of "elect infants." And in the absence

he failed to apprehend the historic Christ." "This is in their view 'salvation by magic.'"

No, this is not "salvation by magic": this is more like salvation by merit, or moral character, a kind of salvation perfectly plain and intelligible, but not as we had supposed the kind accepted and advocated by "the rest of the church." The church doctrine of salvation we had assumed to be that of justification by faith. Paul and Luther evidently did not rely upon personal attainments in character, but upon the personal appropriation of the righteousness of Christ.

What we have characterized as "salvation by magic" is a salvation which is presumed to be effected by the Atonement, when the Atonement is taken and applied to an individual without any consenting or even conscious relation to it on his part. Such a process is a pure abstraction on the human side, a secret transaction in the councils of the Most High.

of any direct statements of Scripture in regard to the doctrine itself, any variation from the prescribed method of salvation is purely speculative. If we waive the exercise of moral agency, and ignore the necessity of a personal appropriation of Christ, what have we left but a kind of baptismal atonement and baptismal regeneration? We think it more reverent, as it is certainly more reasonable, to believe of infants and heathen alike, that according to the development of moral agency they are brought into conscious relations to Christ, and that according to their needs they are enabled to personally appropriate his redemption. We question the advantage and the right of modifying the natural and reasonable conditions of Christianity under the stress of "exceptional cases." Allow Christianity to be, what it claims to be, universal in its relation to the human race, and the necessity for any modification of its conditions is removed. Unity of method becomes the ruling principle in the moral government of God. We have one standard of judgment for all men, one method of salvation, one supreme and sufficient motive to repentance. Divide the moral administration of God into the departments of law and grace, and there will be the constant endeavor to transfer, by some secret process, first the few, then the many, who are under the condemnation of law, into the hope of grace. Salvation by Christ ceases to be the open, plain, real thing it is, and becomes something hidden, vague, unverified and unverifiable by the human consciousness.

But the real question in respect to the Christian salvation goes beyond all "exceptional cases." As Dr. Curry remarks in the same discussion, "The important question respecting this class of cases is not whether a devout and pure-minded heathen or Jew can be saved, but whether persons of those classes are, except in a very few and exceptional cases, such in mind and heart; and granting that all such, if such there are, are 'accepted of God,' the case, as one of *fact*, is not much relieved. . . . We may freely admit that, of every nation, even Jews and heathens, he that fears God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him, and yet doubtfully ask respecting all these classes, 'Are there few that be saved?'" The real and living question, a veritable question of flesh and blood, is not that of theological hospitality toward the exceptional life outside Christianity, but rather that of the large and active relation of Christianity to every life without. The real question is in no sense one of hospitality at all, but one rather as to the divine right of every individual of the human race in Christianity. Must the Christian name remain of necessity and forever an exclusive name as respects the majority of mankind, a designation of privilege for the few, rather than of opportunity for all? And are the great masses of men in the past generations to be simply represented in the kingdom of God by here and there a soul who has climbed up some other way into the Christian fold, while they are to remain in their hopelessness and helplessness? Whenever

the question is raised about these "exceptional cases" it opens at once into the most serious questioning about those cases which are not exceptional but representative. And whenever the Atonement is introduced as the justification for God's acceptance of the few who may be seeking after Him, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him, it suggests the part which the Atonement also takes in the divine search for man. We accept in its fullest and deepest import the sacrificial theory of atonement. But we do not forget that the Christian Atonement points two ways and is set forth as of equal avail toward God and toward man. To the mind of the heathen, atonement represents exclusively the idea of propitiation. To the mind of the Hebrew, it represented the same idea, though it became more and more suggestive of the divine mercy, so that God was able to make use of the idea to give in advance the assurance of his forgiveness, saying to his people in their wanderings, "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." In the sacrifice of Christ the movement is as strong from God to man as from man to God. The Atonement carries the message of human penitence to God; it carries the message of the divine love to man. It gives God access to the human heart, and is the prevailing motive in his struggle with the will of man. Christianity is incomplete in idea, and partial in application, in so far as this fact is not recognized and acknowledged. In other words, the knowledge of the Atonement may be the neces-

sary condition of the decisive choice of the soul for or against God. The knowledge of right and wrong may not be the sufficient condition for such a choice. If, therefore, in our charity we apply the Romish principle of "invincible ignorance" we must extend the working of that principle beyond the knowledge of right and wrong, to the knowledge of Christ and his salvation.¹

We have approached the subject before us through the current discussions about the Christian salvation because they indicate the sensitiveness of the Christian mind upon this matter. No part of the church cares to insist upon the exclusiveness of the Christian name and hope. It is impossible, under the moral sense of our time, to maintain the absoluteness of Christianity and its exclusiveness; to affirm that the Christian is the only type of man acceptable to God, and deny to any man the opportunity to become a Christian. As we have seen, the speculation in regard to the

¹ The reach of this principle is indicated by Dr. Hodge in these generous words: "It is obvious that there is a world-wide distance between an intelligent and malignant rejection of the historic Christ, his Person and offices clearly apprehended, which is *the* damning sin, on the one side, and on the other a failure to recognize Him as misapprehended because of intellectual bias, or the misrepresenting character of the media through which his rays are transmitted. It is certain that a man who really rejects Christ rejects the Father who sent Him. Hence the converse is true: that the man who has truly recognized the Father could not have really rejected Christ."

Atonement as secretly applied to the "exceptionally enlightened heathen," whatever we may say of its value within its own sphere, entirely overlooks the moral uses of the Atonement in the enlightenment of all unenlightened souls. The only consistent and far-reaching solution of the problem, as we think, lies in the principle advocated upon these pages. Progressive Orthodoxy matches the absoluteness of Christianity with its universality. It maintains the Christian type as the only type of man acceptable to God, by allowing to every man his right in Christianity. It affirms and magnifies the Christian Judgment as the one event awaiting all men, and under the sense of the certainty of that event, with its everlasting issues, it acknowledges the reasonableness of assuming that every man will first have his Christian opportunity,—that he will know Christ in his sacrifice before he meets Him in judgment.

Passing, then, to the more definite consideration of the Christian, we assume that the Christian man is the man acceptable to God. The New Testament proceeds upon this assumption. Its assurances and promises, its present benefits and its certainties respecting the future, are applicable only to the Christian.

Our first inquiry is, Whence comes the Christian? How do we gain this type of man? We may say of the individual Christian, as we know him, that he is the result of a definite religious training, or of a definite religious process, which

we call conversion. But this does not answer the question, Where do we get the type? The Christian was not born under the light of nature. He was not developed in the school of law, albeit the law was a school-master to lead to Christ. It may not be unnecessary to remind ourselves—unfortunately the saying is not a truism—that the Christian is the product of Christianity. The type of life which he represents came in with those facts and ideas which belong to historic Christianity. And the type is perpetuated through the prevalence of these facts and the supremacy of these ideas. Christianity invariably precedes the Christian, creating those conditions, and setting in motion those agencies, which need but the coöperation of the individual will to produce the required result in Christian character. Christianity produces a new consciousness in the race, which makes possible the Christian consciousness. Man is another being to himself in the light of the Incarnation and Resurrection. The Incarnation does not create a new value in man; it does more: it reveals to him his real value in the thought of God. The Resurrection does not confer immortality upon man; it gives him the moral advantage of immortality; it puts him under the power of the endless life. Wherever Christianity goes it speaks to men through these facts. And because it speaks through facts its language is positive, awakening, and assuring. There is no uncertainty in what Christianity says of man or to him. There is no con-

tradiction in its utterances. The certainties of nature are against man, not for him. He knows that he must die ; he hopes that he may live again. He is conscious of powers which separate him from all known life ; he believes, half in fear, half in hope, that there is a life above him to which he is related, but he does not dare to urge his kinship with a holy God. The Incarnation is a revelation pure and simple, not a confirmation of the hope or dream of humanity. And atonement, as has been suggested, appears in natural religions only under the idea of propitiation. The idea of an atonement originating with God and consummated through sacrifice on his part is foreign to all natural religions. And the difference in the reflex influence of a belief in a system which expresses the ceaseless striving of man to propitiate an angry deity, and belief in a system of grace working from above in the ceaseless endeavor to turn the sinner from his sin, is simply incalculable. The difference gives the Christian motive to repentance and faith. " We love Him, because He first loved us."

Christianity thus reveals man to himself in a new light, as it uncovers the agencies which are at work toward the renovation of his moral nature and toward his restoration to God. Nature is contradictory in her valuation of man, now strangely exalting him to her high places of power, and again casting him down, or trifling with him as if the veriest plaything in her domain. There are times when man is obliged to take refuge from the

domination and caprice of nature in the one thought that he is a conscious being. Pascal says : —

“ Our whole dignity consists in thought. Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. It is not necessary that the entire universe should arm itself to crush him. A breath of air, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which kills him, because he knows that he dies, and the universe knows nothing of the advantage which it has over him.”

Law elevates man to the dignity of a responsible agent. When he finds himself addressed in the language of moral authority, to which he is capable of responding, he takes a new measure of himself. It is greater to hear the “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not,” of moral law than to stand in the place of a master among inanimate forces. But moral law can only tell man what he ought to be. It leaves him confronted with duty. Christianity comes in to tell him what he may be. It is a revelation to him of his possibilities. It confronts him, not with a legal standard, but with a Life in which he may read his possible character and destiny, and through which he may attain that character and destiny. It assures him of help sufficient and unfailing. It links his struggles and aspirations, even his very repentings, to a power which was at work for him before his effort for himself began, and which will go on, in his behalf, in its steadiness and strength amid the fluctuations of his own strivings. “We,” says Paul to the Christian

converts of Asia Minor, "are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." And again, to the Christians at Philippi, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Christianity thus conditions the life which is to become Christian before the process begins which is to make it Christian. When the Christian idea is apprehended, its revelation of God in his purpose, its interpretation of man in his possibilities, as it is practically apprehended under the training of the Christian home and school and church, then the process through which the Christian is developed, though it may be in some cases severe and protracted, is simple and clear. It is all expressed in the personal act of repentance toward God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The personal appropriation of Christ in his life and death constitutes a sinner a Christian. Henceforth he represents, according to the reality of his faith and the seriousness of his purpose, the new type of manhood. In his individual life he is called, by virtue of this change, "a new creature," "a new creation." As related to other men, he belongs to the Christian type.

Our second inquiry concerns the place of the Christian before God. What is the position into which he is brought by virtue of his relation, through penitence and faith, to Christ? The New

Testament uniformly expresses this condition or estate by one term — sonship. It knows no other term which is not included in this. The teachings of Christ, as indeed his personal relations with men, all point to the establishment of this relationship. But we are so apt to interpret the sayings of our Lord in some exceptional way, as if they were not good when detached from his person, and could not be transferred to the life of the church, that we often fail to apply them in their reality and fullness to the more important questions of Christianity. So that it is only as we pass over into the actual workings of Christianity as a system that we come to understand the practical significance of this idea of sonship. When we read the Epistles of Paul and John, as these writers address themselves to the life coming in from Judaism and heathenism, we see that Christianity is proceeding upon the one principle of building up character and developing personality on the basis of the filial relation. Paul makes this principle most conspicuous, by boldly transferring the working of the divine power in the training of life from the legal to the filial basis. He assures those to whom he writes that the place of sonship is theirs, theirs by the bestowal of grace and according to the rights of faith. They were in it. This was the first thing for them to believe. Nothing could be accomplished in them or through them, in a Christian way, until they believed it. The fact once accepted in full and hearty assurance, the

work in character could go on. So Paul reasons throughout his epistles, striving to establish the idea of sonship in the minds of Christian believers, and to strengthen and encourage them in the assurance of its application to their own lives.

Christianity, when rightly apprehended, always makes the idea of sonship fundamental in personal belief and in the upbuilding of character. Christian character is the outgrowth and development of the filial relation. All the restraints and all the incentives which are peculiar to Christianity centre about this relation of the soul to God. Why does the Christian shrink from wrong-doing? Because he is a child of God, acknowledged as such of Him, and assured of this relationship in his own consciousness. Inconsistency is the restraining power in his life, not fear. And when he falls away into sin, the motive to repentance is not so much the dread of things to come as the present sense of shame. Christ looking upon Peter in his denial, and Peter going out to weep, is the type of Christian condemnation and repentance. In like manner the working of this principle of sonship comes in to take away those selfish motives which are often attributed to the Christian salvation. Why does the Christian strive to build himself up in right character? Because he is conscious that God is working within him "to will and to work for his good pleasure." This is the motive which acts in advance of all other motives toward the same end. The supreme motive to right doing is gratitude,

love, the sense of God's partnership with him in the struggle and in the result. So that here again the Christian is not at work simply for something to come to him in reward, but equally because of something which has come to him for which he would make return. Heaven lies before him in expectation, but the springs of his activity, the sources of his endeavor, lie deep in the consciousness of that love which assures him that he is a child of God.

It may be said that we have sketched the ideal Christian. We reply that we have sketched the real Christian. If the average Christian life does not express itself in the way which has been indicated, it is owing to the prevalence of the spirit of legalism in the church. We grant the prevalence of this spirit. From the beginning until now it has been difficult to persuade men to believe in Christianity, and to live according to Christianity. Hence Paul at the first and Luther afterward. Legalism follows close upon Christianity in the ceaseless endeavor to formulate its doctrines, to prescribe its methods, to dominate its life. If the church is to maintain the freedom of its faith and life, it must be through the maintenance in faith and life of the idea of sonship.

We reach our third and last inquiry, as we ask, What is the office of the Christian in the world? Does Christianity withdraw him from the world or carry him farther into its life? The ruling principle of legalism, in this regard, is separation result-

ing in exclusiveness. What is the ruling spirit of Christianity?

When we say that the method of legalism results in exclusiveness we do not intend to characterize the earlier dispensation. The voice which summoned Abraham from his kindred and from his country declared the purpose of this separation — that in him all nations of the earth might be blessed. This separation was to be grandly inclusive in its result. The same purpose separated out Israel as a people, restricting its intercourse, and subjecting it to peculiar discipline, but keeping its spirit large and open through the development of the Messianic hope. It was only as the purpose of the separation was lost sight of that the national life became hard and exclusive. The dwindling of the hope allowed the growth of the narrower types of the national faith. Judaism gradually ceased to look upon the world in the light of opportunity. The world came to represent more and more temptation from which “the chosen people” was to defend itself. Christianity instantly reversed this conception of the world, and by this change of conception made it safe for its disciples to go into all the world in fulfillment of the command of Christ. The danger or safety of one’s relation to the world always depends upon his conception of the world. To the Christian the world is harmless so long as it represents the idea of opportunity. It is safe for him to gain and use all which it has to offer, thought, wealth, or power, if he can keep this idea uppermost in his mind.

The office of the Christian in the world is to communicate Christianity to the world. Self-protection is secondary, or rather it is most completely gained by the fulfillment of this object. The individual Christian represents this purpose, and the church. The church is the Christian organized to this end. There are other uses of the Christian organization, but this is the object which gives meaning and advantage to all others. This communication of Christianity to the world through the Christian, in his individual or associated life, is effected in various ways. The earliest, as it has been the most persistent, method was that of testimony. The Christian stood out in the world representing a new fact, a new principle, a new faith. Through his life he advertised Christianity. The simpler his life, the more natural his faith, the more he called the attention of men to his religion. Not infrequently this natural and unostentatious witness to his faith cost him his life. Then Christianity was communicated to other lives. Persecution carried it even to the hearts of persecutors. Sometimes the witness to the faith found expression in protest against prevailing immoralities and cruelties. Christianity declared itself in appreciable and effective ways for the rights of man. The Christian became the champion of humanity. The result of these conflicts — the result was always a deliverance or a reform — carried Christianity farther and farther into society, and established it more securely in the respect and affections of men.

But the chief form in which the Christian testimony found expression was the creed. Very early the Christian learned to say, and to say aloud, "I believe." He seems to have been filled with the spirit of the Psalmist who cried out, "I have become a believer, therefore I must let myself be heard." This affirmation of faith was contagious. Next to the life of the Christian, his creed has been, without doubt, the most effective agency in the communication of Christianity. The clear affirmation of faith, when the reasons can be adduced which support it, especially when these reasons are involved, as in the Apostles' Creed, in the recital of facts, is in itself an argument and an inspiration. It is an invitation to the doubting, troubled, and even defiant heart of this world. The power of the creed — the power, that is, of the *believing* Christian — must always be a chief agent in the spread of Christianity. It is a noticeable fact that each new apprehension of Christianity on the part of the church has been the means of a larger and closer contact with the world. On the whole, the advance of Christianity may be traced in the progress of doctrine.

Perhaps the most natural and available way, to the majority, in which the Christian may fulfill his office of communicating Christianity is through his identification with the world. When this identification becomes formal, as in the alliance between church and state, it becomes dangerous. But there are numberless ways in which it may be vital and

even organic, without becoming formal. The Christian is a member of the family, a factor in society, a citizen of the state. He is a partner in the affairs of men. He deals in administration. He is a student, an inquirer into things of common concern, an adventurer, like other men, into the unrevealed and unexplored realms of thought. In all these relations and employments he has the opportunity to leave the personal impress of his Christianity. Probably nothing is more effective or helpful to Christianity than the action of the Christian man, when he is most unconsciously the Christian. But in all these relations there is need for the intentional and well-considered application of Christianity. These are all to be Christianized—vitalized with the Christian spirit, and informed with the Christian purpose. Sometimes it is difficult to cause the individual Christian to see that his personal responsibility extends beyond the use of his personal example. "If I am a Christian in my business," he may ask, "have I not fulfilled my duty?" No. It is your duty to make it easy, in some cases to make it possible, for others to be Christians in the same business. Nor is it sufficiently considered that it may be easier to one's self to attempt a reform in a given business, when its methods have become unchristian and immoral, than to attempt to maintain alone the true and Christian method. There may be times, under the competitions of business, when the Christian man must resort to questionable methods, or succumb to

failure, if he cannot change the method and lift the standard. And when we pass from matters of more private interest to those of public concern, the necessity for the active and coöperative communication of Christian methods and principles becomes apparent. Present examples are to be found in the movement for the protection of the family, and in that for purity in political life.

The communication of Christianity, however, assumes its large and imperative form as it finds expression in the endeavor of the Christian to fulfill his Lord's command in the conversion of the world. Christianity is a salvation. That salvation is meant for every man. And men are to carry it to one another. It is to be on its human side a communicated salvation. It has no other visible power of extension. The figure of the seed or the leaven does not apply to Christianity as a salvation extending from man to man. The human element is the active element in its extension. There must be a going into all the world, a preaching of the gospel to the whole creation. This going into all the world means searching through the city, following along the track of emigration or commerce or adventure, penetrating into the dark and well-nigh inaccessible places of the earth. This preaching the gospel to the whole creation means that wherever man lives the Christian has a message for him. And we are not to forget that the known contents of the message are the reason for the going. Christianity is to be carried because it is a gospel, "good

news," "glad tidings." Like his Divine Master the Christian is sent "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him may be saved." It is to be feared that Christianity is suffering more at present in the missionary form of expression than in any other. Christianity is apprehended as a faith, as an institution, as an organic force in society. We fear that it is not sufficiently apprehended as a gospel. The church stands equipped with organization; it lacks, if anywhere, in the spirit of communication. But this lack is serious, and if long continued will visibly diminish the missionary power of the church. We are wont to say in the consciousness of any spiritual want that the church needs a revival of religion. Let us be more specific, in the sense of our present want, and say that the church needs a revival of Christianity.

VII.

CHRISTIANITY AND MISSIONS.

THE principles upon which we have been reasoning are both attested and applied in the command of our Lord: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

No such commission had ever before been given; none such, we may presume, could have been. The end must be present in the beginning in all moral as in all natural development. The absolute ethical good which holy spirits find and enjoy in God can become the law and blessedness of souls that have sinned only as it first becomes the means of their regeneration and personal conquest of evil. Here is the problem of human recovery, as Kant so plainly saw from the heights of philosophy, and all men serious and earnest in the pursuit of righteousness have practically discovered. Christ alone solved it, and for all. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning as the goal, of human perfection. He first brought into the world, as a living factor in its religious history, a flawless and consummate righteousness, realizing it in his conduct no less than in his precepts, recognizing and meet-

ing its utmost demands in his death as well as in his life, offering himself an utter sacrifice for it, and rising in the power of God in attestation of its victory. A universal religion for a sinful and guilty race implies a universal Saviour. A moral and spiritual recovery of mankind, even as an aim of benevolent purpose, presupposes the provision of a power in motive and a use of this power proportionate to the evil to be confronted and the good to be accomplished. "It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell." The fullness was set over against the need. Christianity is not a matter of words, but of deed and of power. Its salvation was not offered until it could be made effectual. As its aim is human transformation, — a regeneration of the individual which is a new creation, a moral renewal of society which realizes in this world the kingdom of heaven, a completed fellowship above, which is the consummation in body and soul, and the eternal fellowship, of the holy from every generation and every realm, — it must bear within itself all the forces requisite for the achievement of such results. These powers are provided and pledged in the name into which it baptizes; and not until God was thus revealed were they supplied and made available and effective. Transient theophanies, typical sacrifices, gifts of the Spirit there were before; but no Incarnation, no Atonement, no descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. All antecedent revelations had been preparatory and partial, and all spiritual renewals no

less anticipatory, prophetic, and incomplete. Jesus alone lived a perfect life ; alone revealed the Father as the necessary and real correlative of an actual conscious sonship ; alone entered into the entire range of human need and represented it in perfect obedience, righteousness, and love before a merciful and holy God ; alone drew into the race, in the fullness of its power to transform and save, the absolute good there is for men in God ; alone provided the perfect pattern which could be used in the moulding of character ; alone imparted the motive power which could reach to all conditions of human life and stages of human development, through the preaching of the gospel and the demonstration of the Spirit. Whatever we may think of antecedent revelations, the apostle teaches us the large fact and truth in the case when he says, even of the days of Jesus's earthly ministry, "The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The risen exalted Christ sent the Spirit. Then, then for the first time, was there in the world a religion competent to a world-wide mission.

That Christian missions thus imply and rest upon the absoluteness and universality of Christianity has been evident throughout their history. Entire submission to Jesus's supreme authority, reliance upon his divine power, belief in the sufficiency and completeness of the gospel and in its necessity for human salvation, have been the constant sources and signs of their power. Even where such principles have been restricted in their applica-

tion or theoretically impaired, they have been the heart and soul of movements which will always compel admiration. If in the line of thought on which we shall now proceed attention is turned predominantly to what is defective, it is not because we are unmoved by the greatness and glory of what has been achieved, but because we hope that by such a method lessons may be learned which will be helpful in the performance of duties which are at hand.

The early church entered with zeal on the work of individual testimony to the saving power of Christ. The gospel was soon promulgated throughout the Roman Empire, and beyond its boundaries. The witness of martyrdom shows how real was the belief in the absolute supremacy of Christ. The note expressed by the word catholic marks the church's sense of its wholeness or completeness in doctrine and membership, and, finally, of its universality, and thus points to the universality of the gospel. But in various ways these predicates of Christianity were impaired. At the outset a crass millennialism clouded the vision of very many. The heathen nations were regarded as ruled by demons. The conflict between good and evil in this world is a battle between Satan and Christ. The victory will be won by the visible coming of Christ to set up his kingdom at Jerusalem. The nations will be judged, not saved. Justin Martyr tells us that, although those who were orthodox Christians on all points were assured as to the truth of this

doctrine, many true Christians thought otherwise. Yet for more than two centuries after the apostolic age, with the exception of the clear-eyed Origen, no teacher of the church appears to have anticipated that Christianity would conquer the Empire by virtue of its inherent moral and spiritual forces, or that a divine kingdom would be established in the world by the preaching of the gospel. This failure to appreciate what we may call the intensive absoluteness of Christianity, the absoluteness of its moral quality, affected injuriously its entire development in the early centuries. The theory and practice of the church in its work of establishing Christ's kingdom ceased more and more to be ruled by the idea of spiritual regeneration. There was no vision of a world-wide civilization transformed by the power of the gospel. On the contrary, we see the beginnings of a reign of asceticism and monasticism. The dissolution of the Roman Empire was rightly anticipated, but it was not dreamed of that the agents in this work of destruction would be heathen tribes who would one day, converted to Christianity, be the chief instruments in carrying a purer gospel to nations outside the then known world, and to the very lands where the apostles established the *matrices ecclesiæ*. So much larger and more merciful is the providential unfolding of prophecy than what once passed for its valid and orthodox interpretation !

The conversion of Constantine and his ascension to the throne as sole emperor changed men's

thoughts of the kingdom of God. The church started on a career of influence and authority in union with the state. With power came the anticipation of earthly dominion. Augustine became for mediæval history the exponent of the altered opinion. The millennium was now understood to have begun with the first Advent, or at least with the conquest of the Empire. The kingdom of God is the catholic or universal church, which may be known by its historical connection with the churches founded by apostles. It is an outward visible organization; there is no salvation outside of its pale, although not all within it are true members and will finally be saved. Here again was an encroachment upon that spiritual quality which is essential to any true conception of the absoluteness of the gospel. With this conception of the church was associated in Augustine's mind, though not as a logical sequence, the doctrine of a division of mankind into two classes whose final destination should illustrate two aspects of the divine character, its justice and its grace. He seems to have regarded the former as a more important attribute or quality than the latter; at least he teaches that more by far are condemned than saved, in order that thus may be shown what is due to all. The church never ratified Augustine's predestinationism, although it affirmed his doctrine of the prevenience and supremacy of grace. Nearly every great missionary of the mediæval era was a monk,¹ and monastic Au-

¹ Maclear, *A History of Christian Missions during the Middle Ages*, p. 406.

gustinianism was ordinarily a diluted doctrine. Two principles, however, became established in Western missionary belief, — original sin and the necessity of baptism. All men are by nature exposed and justly condemned to eternal punishment. Divine grace operates for the rescue of the lost through the visible church, by its priesthood and sacraments. All not saved by these instrumentalities perish everlastingly. At bottom there was a conception of God inconsistent with the absoluteness of Christianity, and even with his ethical perfection. For it is as necessary that God should be benevolent as that He should be just, and justice itself is deprived of its prerogative when it no longer maintains the rights of redeeming love. Unless the justice as well as the compassion of God are pledged to Redemption, it can no longer claim a place in the divine purposes. And if Christianity represents but a subordinate attribute or quality of the divine nature it is but an imperfect good, and can play but an inferior part in the universe. The mediæval thought of God and of Christianity was profoundly dualistic, save as it gained a seeming unity by an exaltation of an unethical omnipotence. In neither way could Christianity be rightly interpreted. Where this thought was most ethical, it made Christianity something subordinate and limited; where it was least ethical, it made Christianity arbitrary. Mediæval missions suffered from these causes. They aimed too little at spiritual conquests. They were not inspired by the conception

of Christianity as a revelation of universal and absolute love. To the church at large the heathen were but as Turks. That the former should fall by the sword of the divine justice was as fitting as that the latter should be massacred by Crusaders. Happily names like those of Raymund Lull and St. Francis of Assisi rise up to qualify such statements. We speak only of the general sentiment and practice.

One of the most striking evidences of the failure of mediæval Christianity to appreciate the universality of the gospel is found in one of its noblest products, the "*De Imitatione Christi*" of Thomas à Kempis. This little book has had a circulation beyond any other writing outside of the sacred canon. It is the flower and finest fruit of mediæval mysticism. One must read it often to appreciate its strange power, its unworldliness, its deadly hostility to pride, its austere solid sweetness, its calm deep undertone of condemnation for every endeavor to satisfy an immortal spirit with anything but the love of God.

The late Dean of St. Paul's, Mr. Milman, has passed a severe judgment on this book. Its aim, he affirms, is entirely and absolutely selfish. Never was there such a misnomer as its title. Much may be said in mitigation of this censure. To escape from selfishness is the purpose of the practical mystical school, and although this is less pronounced in the "*De Imitatione*" than in the "*Theologia Germanica*," it is still there. The writer combats

externalism and formalism. Deeds of charity are profitless without love. "He doeth much who loveth much; he doeth much who doeth well; and he doeth much and well who constantly preferreth the good of the community to the gratification of his own will."

Yet mediæval mysticism, with all its moral earnestness, self-renunciation, divine aspirations, and with its lofty doctrine of the soul as *capax Dei*, produced no missionary hero. Its object, as Dean Milman justly says, is the elevation of the individual soul, of the man wholly isolated from his kind. The lauded preference of the good of the community is a sacrifice of self-will rather than a realization of an infinite good, capable of blessing all, and found only as it becomes the motive to an inexhaustible benevolence. This good, moreover, is not appreciated as redeeming love, which penetrates the souls of the rebellious and guilty, and solves the problem how a selfish heart can be made unselfish and Christlike. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that piety so deep as that of this priceless book lacks aggressive and missionary power. It missed as really, though in a very different way, the true absoluteness of Christianity as did the formalism and scholasticism it reacted from and combated.

The Reformers remedied the essential defect of the mediæval method of piety by restoring Paul's doctrine of faith. Faith is not mere assent to authoritative formulas, but an acceptance of forgive-

ness through Christ, an acceptance of Him in his personal truth and love, so that He becomes the inspiring principle of a new life of gratitude and devotion. The doctrine of spiritual personal regeneration thus regained its rights. And more than this, — the divinely appointed method of complete spiritual restoration again became clear. But as piety alone, even the profound and spiritual piety of the mediæval mystics, did not produce missionaries, so the evangelical apprehension by the Reformers of the way of salvation was equally for a time inoperative. The reason, if we mistake not, was at bottom the same. In neither case was a one-sided individualism overcome; in neither was there a due appreciation of the universality of the gospel.

The failure of the Reformers to grasp the missionary idea is sometimes excused on the ground of their absorption in the task immediately obligatory. The apology is valid, perhaps, as respects the actual organization of missionary movements. But something more than the absence of active participation in such efforts appears. The missionary idea itself — a recognition of the Christian duty to evangelize heathendom — is wanting.¹ In the case of Luther his eschatological opinions obscured his vision. He thought the end of the world was at hand, and that the heathen were doomed to destruction. We cannot but suspect at times in his

¹ So Dr. Warneck in Herzog and Plitt's *Real Encyclopædie*, x. 37 sqq.

feeling toward Jews and Turks a slight survival of the old Teutonic barbarism, as in Tertullian's exultation in view of the last judgment there appears to be something of Punic ferocity. Calvin had a larger faith as to the extension of Christianity; but, so far as we have observed, nowhere urges the obligation resting upon the church to christianize the heathen nations. When he comments on the "great commission" his thought is engrossed with the equality which it implies between Jews and Gentiles. The Apostle Paul was "not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," that is, to the pagan everywhere. Calvin's thought, like Luther's, concerns itself not with heathen Gentiles but with Christian, who, under the gospel, are made equal to the Jew. The duty of sending missionaries to the unconverted heathen is not recognized in his comment. It seemed to him to be perfectly just for God to consign all the heathen to endless punishment on account of original sin, apart from their actual transgressions, and it was not fitting that any subject of the infinite sovereign should question his acts. Doubtless he would have rejoiced to hear that Protestant Christianity was gaining a foothold anywhere, and he would not have been indifferent (as perhaps the Genevan support of Villegaignon shows) to any missionary undertaking for which Providence seemed to be opening the way. But his conception of Christianity was colored through and

through by his conception of God as an absolute sovereign, who sends salvation to whom He wills and withholds it from whom He wills. Redemption is particular, not universal; Christianity is a means to an end, a special remedy in a particular exigency, not the consummation of God's revelation to the universe of his ethical nature as perfect Love. A world-wide missionary thought and aim, it might be supposed, would spring up in a mind so thoroughly imbued as was Calvin's with reverence for the divine sovereignty before such a command as that on which he comments. But it did not. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." The "great commission" is the outcome of the great sacrifice. If the latter is conceived of as limited, the former is not likely to be apprehended as universal. Count Zinzendorf interpreted the divine sovereignty better than Calvin when he said: "The whole earth is the Lord's; men's souls are all his; I am debtor to all."

These words were uttered in 1741. They struck the key-note of modern missions; but many decades were still to pass away before the leading Protestant churches, other than the *Unitas Fratrum*, were moved to action.

Many powerful influences conspired to bring about such a movement.

The Roman Catholic powers lost the supremacy of the seas. The colonial power of England rose to an extraordinary height. Colonization and traffic brought the leading Protestant nations into connec-

tion with many and wide-spread peoples. Missionary effort on any large scale has always been preceded by great advances in the means or occasions of intercourse. The roads of the Roman Empire, and the Empire itself, opened the way for the first preaching of the gospel. The irruptions of the barbarians prepared for and stimulated the Teutonic missions. The very remarkable and extensive Roman Catholic missions of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries were intimately connected with the maritime and colonial enterprises of Portugal, Spain, and France. The more sporadic and inferior efforts of the earlier Protestantism had a similar basis. The present interest in missions arises in part from the fact that the world is now open to the missionary to an altogether unprecedented degree. The beginnings of this great change in the relations of Protestant nations to heathendom were making themselves felt when Christians, in England and in this country, were moved to those organized efforts for the spread of the gospel in foreign lands which have marked the religious history of this century.

Another cause was the development, in the eighteenth century, of the sentiment of humanity. No one can read the appeals to the Christian public sent forth by the founders and early friends of the leading missionary societies without being impressed by the prominence which is given to humaneness and pity. Those familiar with the literature of this subject will at once recall the stirring

addresses of Dr. David Bogue, who has been called, not undeservedly, the father of the London Missionary Society. As one specimen of many we cite a few sentences from a document put forth in 1818 by the Church Missionary Society:—

“Whither can the fainting eye of misery turn but to this great Protestant Empire . . . ?

“Where, then, is our love to our fellow-creatures, if we do not rise to communicate to them that unspeakable blessing, which has first visited us, that it may be sent on to others? Where is our humanity, our benevolence, our compassion, if we spring not forth in this office of grace? What! shall the unhappy widow still perish on the funeral pile—shall the helpless infant still sink under the hand of its parent—shall the deformed orgies of Juggernaut continue to prevail, and the bones of the wretched pilgrim whiten its plains—shall the horrid rites of cannibalism yet subsist, and temples for the worship of devils be openly reared—shall all the disgusting ceremonies of impurity and blood remain in undiminished force—shall ignorance and vice and despair brood over the fairest portion of the globe, and the prostrate understanding and savage passions of man bind him a slave to earth?—and shall Britons hesitate to convey to the several sufferers the knowledge, and grace, and life, of an eternal Redemption?”¹

A further and yet more important influence came from the religious revivals of the last century,—the Pietism of Spenser, the Moravian and Wesleyan movements, the preaching of Whitefield, the

¹ *Invitation to assist the Attempts of the Church Missionary Society for the Conversion of the Heathen.* London, 1818.

“Great Awakening” in this country. With these were connected important doctrinal changes, particularly a clearer and more Biblical apprehension of conversion as a spiritual renovation wrought by the Holy Spirit through the influence of truth applied as motive, and a recognition of the Atonement not merely as sufficient for the salvation of all men, but as intended for all. The first organized action which ushered in the new missionary era came from the Calvinistic Baptists in England. When William Carey, its originator, at a meeting of clergymen proposed for discussion the topic: “The duty of Christians to attempt the spread of the gospel among heathen nations,” an elderly divine sprang to his feet, and thundered out, “Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid or mine.” We see the old Calvinism and the new here in conflict. Carey found supporters in men who adopted the principles of what abroad was called “American Theology,” and is known here as “Edwardean” or “New School” or “New England” divinity. All the earlier and more important societies — the Baptist Missionary, the London Missionary, the Church Missionary — seem to have been founded and supported by men who had broken more or less openly with the old Calvinism, and obtained larger conceptions of the Atonement of Christ than it afforded. Even when the old phraseology is retained the emphasis is different. In this country, where the new doctrine had gained

powerful supporters, it became prominent at once in pleas for missions. In the sermon preached by Dr. Woods in Salem, at the ordination of the first missionaries of the American Board (February 6, 1812), he urged, as a motive for "effort to seek the conversion of all mankind," "the plenteousness of the provision which Christ has made for their salvation," an atonement not only "sufficient for Asiatics and Africans," but "made for them as well as for us." He rebuked as indicative of the limited and exclusive spirit of Judaism any lower estimate of the Christian dispensation.

Besides the postulates of universal sinfulness and universal atonement, one other was generally accepted by the founders of modern missions, namely, the indispensableness of revealed truth. The last named principle, like the first, struck its roots into the traditional theology. The Savoy Declaration, adopted by the Congregational churches in England and America as a Confession of Faith, affirmed that the —

"Promise of Christ, and salvation by Him is revealed only by the Word of God : neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by Him, so much as in a general or obscure way ; much less that men destitute of the revelation of Him by the promise or gospel should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance."

This necessity of a knowledge of revealed truth is the burden of early missionary sermons preached

before the American Board. It will suffice to refer to President Appleton's, whose object was to show that "the true character of God is not known except by revelation." He declines to agitate the question "whether some individuals may not be sanctified by the Spirit who are precluded from all acquaintance with revealed religion." Such purely exceptional cases he appears to regard as of no serious account in the large and practical issue. How much this principle of the necessity of revelation was an axiom with the fathers may be seen in Dr. Emmons's sermon on "The Hopeless State of the Heathen"; it is assumed by the preacher without argument. The acceptance of the same principle by the promoters of missions in England may be illustrated by a reference to a published sermon before the Church Missionary Society by Rev. E. T. Vaughan. His proposition is: "The Reception of Christ is essential to Salvation." Such an insistence upon opportunity for the working of the motives of redemption wherever there is recovery from the guilt and power of sin was particularly appropriate and consistent on the part of men who were contending against the doctrine of passive regeneration.

Thus far the new missionary movement was strongly in the direction of a better understanding of the absoluteness and universality of the gospel, and indeed was largely the fruit of such an appreciation. It is not strange, judging by past experience, that it did not at once go farther. Every

advance in thought requires time to work itself clear, to perfect its somewhat disturbed connections with the past, to measure its strength and discover what it can contribute to the future. Luther saw that in the Reformation principle of justification by faith only lay the germ of a new doctrine of personality; but how slowly this conception has developed its power. So, in the principle of the universality of the Atonement which introduced the modern era of "world-missions," was involved the doctrine, which is just beginning to make itself felt, of the personal relation of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Redeemer, to each and every member of the race. For the new and inspiring thought in the rise of modern missions was not simply that Christ's passion is sufficient for all, — this was the conservative orthodoxy of the day, — but that He died in intention and purpose for all. Intention and purpose imply and establish a personal relation, and this relation remained to be thought out if the movement begun was not to be arrested in mid career, and the absoluteness of Christianity still left in shadow and partial eclipse.

There were as usual in such cases traditional prepossessions and assumptions which were not yet adjusted to the new principle or excluded by it.

One of these was a belief in the universal doom of the pagan. The Reformers inherited the Augustinian doctrine of humanity as a *massa perditionis*. Only sovereign grace rescues those who are elected to salvation. Christianity, instead of be-

ing absolute and universal, was interpreted as particular and exclusive. Luther began to break away from this mode of conception when he learned to read the doctrine of election in the wounds of Christ; but the dogma of universal and damnable guilt by Adam's sin stood fast. The Biblical judgments upon the heathen were understood to include their final doom. The means of grace were necessary to salvation, and the heathen were destitute of them. There being no hope beyond the present life, all were regarded as lost. A Lutheran pastor in Denmark was "ordered to leave the kingdom on account of having preached what was condemned as 'the damnable heresy that by God's grace even heathens might be saved.'" The Reformed doctrine admitted the possibility of the salvation of some pagans by election, but made little or no account of it. In the beginning of the last century and the close of the preceding, religious people in Boston and vicinity were deeply interested in a series of Tuesday lectures by the Rev. Samuel Willard, pastor of the South Church, and one of the most eminent divines in New England history before the days of Jonathan Edwards. These lectures were published posthumously, with a preface by Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince in which this body of divinity is characterized as "one of the noblest and choicest . . . we have anywhere met with, or we are apt to think has yet appeared in the world." Hardly any book, we are told, has been more passionately wished for. The author raises

the question "whether we may have any grounded hopes of the salvation of such as never enjoyed the Scriptures?" and reasons to the conclusion that any such hope is groundless.

"There is no reason to be given for it, yea, and it tends to subvert the gospel and make the ordinances of it unnecessary, to encourage men in neglect and ignorance of the Scriptures; for either they must be saved without Christ, which is impossible; or by Him without believing, which takes away the new covenant condition; or believe without knowledge of Him, which takes away the very nature of Faith; or come to the knowledge of Him some other way, which is unaccountable; the light of nature will not do it; the only way of God's appointment is by the Scriptures; to suppose any other is to impose upon God."

The further inference is drawn that but few are saved "compared with the rest of mankind." A century later, in the sermon already named, Dr. Emmons still reasoned in the same strain. The heathen have been given up to "judicial blindness and hardness of heart." They do not possess the means of grace without which no soul can be saved, and they will continue to go down to hell until "God sends them the gospel." In their memorial to the governor of Bombay, December 4, 1813, the first missionaries sent out by the American Board to India affirm: —

"We looked upon the heathen, and alas! three fourths of the inhabitants of the globe had not been told that Jesus had 'tasted death for every man.' We saw them

following their fathers in successive millions to eternal death. The view was overwhelming."

This conception of the doom of the pagan was strengthened, as we have intimated, by a further traditional dogma, that of distinct individual moral probation. This survived, and indeed first definitely appeared in Calvinistic circles, after the doctrine of the imputation to Adam's posterity of guilt for his transgression had been abandoned. In their contest with New England theologians the Princeton divines were fully aware that this tenet was an innovation, and they pressed their opponents more closely at this point than any other. "Is it not necessary," they asked, "that a moral being should have a probation before his fate is decided? When had men this probation?" "A probation to be fair must afford as favorable a prospect of a happy as of an unhappy conclusion." Such a probation, they argued, was given in the trial of our first parents. It is not realized under the fallen condition of their descendants. The conception of this life's being the period, and this world the place where every human being is undergoing, individually or personally, a test by which his eternal destiny will be determined, seems to have obtained footing in the Western church in connection with monastic rules of discipline and a semi-Pelagian anthropology. It is foreign to strict Augustinianism and Calvinism. It naturally found favor, in the eighteenth century, in the revolt from the Reformed anthropology, and has a place in the development of

the doctrine of free moral agency. Bishop Butler's Analogy — which logically, it should be noticed, stops far short of the conclusion to which the dogma in question has been pressed, — helped to its diffusion and general acceptance. Combined with the received opinions as to the necessity of revealed truth and of faith to salvation, it left open for the heathen world no door of hope. Christianity was excluded from the great majority of men who had lived, and for whom the Saviour died, as a motive or means of recovery. Faith turned to a future millennium, and fondly counted up the myriads of the saved. But a universal atonement limited in its operation by the being who made it was a contradiction too palpable and violent to remain concealed. The great forces of progress which had helped to bring in a new missionary age worked against such limitations. The sentiment of humanity, itself a child of the gospel, protested against them. More thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures under improved methods of interpretation, the heightened influence of the gospel, bringing men's minds into larger knowledge of the mind of Christ and deeper sympathy with his love to men, clearer and higher consequent conceptions of the true character of God, gradually changed the tone of Christian thought about the heathen. Their moral degradation was even better understood than before. Their need of the gospel was no less clear. But God's purpose concerning them was less and less dogmatically affirmed. Probably the old ap-

peal from their inevitable doom never had the effectiveness sometimes attributed to it. Dr. James A. Alexander, writing in the "Princeton Review" in 1843, affirmed that the great mass of Christians in America took "no real interest in Foreign Missions," and gave as one of the reasons for this apathy a "secret skepticism as to the real danger of the heathen." This "skepticism" has not been long in revealing itself. "The plain truth is," remarks a brilliant orthodox New England theologian, "that human nature and sanctified nature give out." Berkeley was said by Reid to have "proved by unanswerable arguments what no man in his senses can believe." It has happened in this wise again and again with theological dogmas not founded in Christianity. That the heathen, as other men, are lost without the redemption provided in Christ, that they need the missionary and the gospel, are evident truths. For ourselves we accept the doctrine of the fathers of modern missions that men everywhere need for recovery the means of grace, but the conclusion that all are lost who do not receive them in this life is another matter. Even when such a dogma is theoretically held it is no longer pressed in pleas for missions. The secretaries of our missionary societies, so far as we are aware, with possibly here and there an exception, do not now touch this chord. The organ of the London Missionary Society, with commendable frankness, has recently remarked : —

"There was a time, and this not long ago, when the

most forcible appeal for missions was drawn from the belief that the heathen who did not hear of Christ must drop into a hell of unending torment. The nobler thoughts of God which have of late taken possession of the church have rendered it impossible to believe that men could be eternally lost for not having believed truths never offered for their acceptance."

We cannot regard this language as in any respect too strong. The intelligence and heart of the Christian church not merely decline to accept the old dogma of the universal perdition of the heathen, — they repudiate it. In the absence of any thorough reconsideration of the subject some take refuge in agnosticism; others refuse to think on the subject; others resort to a vague assertion of the divine leniency, a proportioning of judgment to light and opportunity; others are reasoning, along ever fading lines of moral attenuation, through the lowest supposable degree of saving faith in a pious Hebrew to the dimmest spark of spiritual light in a pious Gentile; others are reviving the doctrine taught in the notable "Apology" of Robert Barclay (A. D. 1675), which adds to a remarkable statement of the universality of the Atonement the confession of an equally universal supernatural enlightenment of mankind during a day or opportunity of grace; others find this saving knowledge of the Father and the Son in the natural conscience, a doctrine which Barclay, as the church generally, has deemed "Socinian and Pelagian." Whatever the theory or mode of re-

lief, it is practically believed that large numbers of the heathen will be saved, even though they die without "the outward preaching of the gospel."

If this were a mere question of the number of the saved we should not think it important here to dwell upon it. The absoluteness and universality of the gospel are not dependent on the degree of its success in the salvation of sinners. This question belongs to Theodicy, which is far from being a complete science, or capable of a perfect solution of the problem of evil. We believe, indeed, on Scriptural as well as rational grounds, that Christianity will be glorified in its triumphs over sin, and that the satisfaction of the Redeemer in the fruit of his passion involves the perfect recovery to holiness of countless numbers of those for whom He died. But we are not convinced that none will be lost, that Satan will finally appear truly as an angel of light. The absoluteness and universality of the gospel which are assured to us in the Scriptures are ethical and spiritual, an absoluteness of holy love, not of mere power, a perfect expression and realization of the moral nature of God in his universe for its greatest possible well being. The highest point which Theodicy as yet can reach is given in the touching and searching question of the ancient parable: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?"

Nor, if the present change of belief as to the necessary doom of the pagan involved merely the withdrawal or modification of one motive to Chris-

tian missions, would the problem presented be specially difficult or urgent. The only question would be, how the argument for missions shall be adapted to such a changed attitude of mind. But the real issue is much broader and deeper. The question of the salvation of the heathen is simply one aspect of the fundamental religious question of our time: the claim of Christianity to be the one perfect and final religion for mankind. Involved in this issue are inquiries such as these: Is the final judgment universal? Do the ultimate destinies of men turn on their personal relation to Christ? Is Christianity essentially ethical and spiritual? Is its salvation mediated by motives, including personal influence, addressed to and operative in the human reason, affections, and will? Is there one system of salvation for Jew and Gentile, as one final judgment? Is God's purpose of creation and redemption fulfilled except as He manifests himself to every human being as Redeemer as well as Judge? What inference upon this question is legitimate from the universality of Christ's Person in its constitution, the universality of Christ's atonement, and the universality of Christ's judgment? How and why is He the Son of Man, the second Adam, the Creator, Mediator, and Ruler of the universe?

We cannot but think that the interests of missions to the heathen require a readjustment of pleas in their behalf in the light of the Scriptural and rational answers which must be given to such questions. If this is not done there is danger not

merely of the loss of a particular motive to missions, but of a loss of faith in the principles which underlie the whole missionary movement. The cause of missions hitherto has rested, as we have said, on the postulates of universal sinfulness, universal atonement, and the indispensableness of faith. It rests ultimately on the divine command (Matt. xxviii. 18-20), which implies the universality and absoluteness of Christianity. The dogma of the damnation of the heathen is not one of these postulates, nor is it a Biblical teaching, but a corollary which now depends upon a dogma which is no part nor presupposition of the gospel — that of the limitation of probation for all men to the present life. This dogma is now working, as do all untruthful exaggerations, with a disturbing and injurious effect. It is driving its advocates to positions inconsistent with the fundamental axioms of Christian missions. They cannot accept the old conclusion of the universal perdition of the pagan. They continue, however, to insist upon the limitation of probation. The only and necessary relief is in a reduction of Christianity, a lessening of its claims, and a corruption of its ethical and spiritual quality. The endeavor is to find grounds of hope for the heathen outside of Christianity, or outside of the known sphere of its operation as moral and spiritual truth working as a new and mighty motive-power in the formation of character. That, in quarters where this limitation of probation is deemed essential to orthodoxy, the drift of opinion

is strongly in this direction is abundantly evident. The caution, indeed, is still interposed that the evidence requires us to hold that the "hopeful" cases are rare and purely exceptional, but the line of movement entered upon and the motive to it point decisively in one direction, namely, to a very large inclusion in the kingdom of Christ of men who are supposed to be saved by Him without knowledge of Him, and by none of the means or motives which are distinctive and characteristic in the Christian life. For the movement cannot be arrested by the recognition of merely exceptional cases. This brings no relief. It does not meet the real difficulty. It fails to take account of the efficient cause of the change in men's views. That cause, as the "Chronicle of the London Missionary Society" asserts, is the growth in Christian consciousness of "nobler thoughts of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ." Exceptional cases are wholly incommensurate with the magnitude such a revelation introduces into the problem. To say that Christ is fitted by the foreordained constitution of his Person to sustain a personal relation to every man, that He actually died in intent and purpose for every man, that He will judge every man, as He created and redeemed every man, and then to say that incalculable millions of these very men will never hear of the gospel as a provision of mercy for them, will never have opportunity to accept it, and that the comparatively few of their number who will be saved will be recovered without "the establish-

ment of this personal relation to our Lord," — is worse than poor logic, — it is an insult, however unintentional, to Christianity, and practically derogatory to its claims to absoluteness and finality. We are not insensible to the breadth and spirituality of the theory embodied in the Confession of the Society of Friends, but cannot find sufficient support for it in historical fact and reality. We recognize in its full value all that can be said about "elect" Chinese, or "elect" Jews in Christendom, as about "elect infants," and "all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." We recall Peter's language: "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him." But we recall also that Peter was sent to Cornelius to teach him the words by which he and his house should be saved (Acts xi. 14), and that when "filled with the Holy Ghost" the same Apostle affirmed of the historic Christ, — "Jesus Christ of Nazareth," — "in none other is there salvation" (Acts iv. 8, 10, 12): and we cannot but think it derogatory to this salvation fully to identify it with any experience which does not include the knowledge of the Father through the Son. And if the present movement, in certain orthodox circles, to relieve the demand from a larger and more Christian view of the character of God for a wide extension of hope for the heathen, is not freed from the limitations of this inferential dogma about their

probation, it will in our judgment become more and more difficult to maintain in effectiveness the principle which experience testifies lies at the very heart of Christian missions — the indispensableness of the gospel.

A firm and practical conviction of the rightful and sole supremacy of Christianity has been the source of the strength and the heroism of the greatest, the most effective missionaries from the days of the Apostle of the Gentiles to the present hour. We are in earnest that no dogma be interposed which limits the operation of its divine power to conditions which exclude its exercise in any intelligible way, or on any extensive scale. We believe, and we think there is need of asserting the principle, that the author of Christianity will give it in time, as in all other respects, a fitting opportunity for its operation. We would send out missionaries who can ask men to renounce all other systems because they are persuaded that Christianity, and this alone, fulfills all that is good in every other, and meets the deficiencies of every other ; missionaries who in the light of all of God's revelations of himself, whether by human reason or human history or special inspiration of prophets and apostles or by Incarnation, with clear intelligence and perfect assurance of faith will present Christ as the rightful and the only Saviour and Lord ; and we would not weaken their message by loading it with a dogma of the doom of the ancestors of the men to whom they preach, a dogma contradictory to the name

they proclaim and into which they baptize, or by accompanying it with an apology for Christianity which lowers it in principle to the level of other religions, or makes it essentially a system operative in some occult way and not as "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The historical course we have followed has brought to view only a few salient features of the missionary activity of the church. Many movements which would deserve attention in but a brief sketch of missions have been wholly unnoticed. Enough, however, has been presented to suggest most important lessons.

It is evident that the mere letter of the divine command is insufficient to awaken the spirit of missions. This has stood before the eye of the church for eighteen centuries, and yet how partial the response! That the church has been derelict in duty in this matter cannot be questioned. We would not write a word which could be understood as an attempt to condone a culpable apathy and unbelief. Yet it would seem that the command of our Lord has a fullness and grandeur of meaning which require time, and varied and protracted experience, for their development. However this may be, the divine wisdom and grace, which overrule the errors and sins of men for the sublimest ends, have led the church from one degree of attainment in the understanding of the gospel to another, and have proportioned its opportunities for expansion to its growth in intelligence and purity.

It might almost of itself justify the introduction of the Second Epistle of Peter into the Canon that it so deeply and spiritually interprets the delay in the coming of the Lord. Time, we are taught, is of no account, as measured by days or millenniums, in the plan of a Being who does not wish "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He will secure for his purpose of redemption fitting opportunity. Its character will not be changed by hurrying anything. Moral processes will be granted the necessary periods. God has always cared more for the quality of faith than for its quantity. If his church is not ready to proclaim the pure gospel of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, He may allow it to work out its own salvation with fear and trembling through weary generations before He vouchsafes to it the opportunity of a world-wide mission.

It is of importance to note that the advance of Christianity has been identified hitherto with a deeper and wider apprehension of its absoluteness and universality. The first progress of the gospel was arrested until the church grasped the idea of a universal kingdom of God in this world. When it was gained, Europe lay at her feet. Mediæval missions and Christianity are the outcome. The movement was then debased and corrupted by formalism and sacerdotalism. When recovery came, and the absoluteness of divine grace — the immediate communication to the individual believer of the infinite good of salvation — was reasserted, religion

came forth with new powers of conquest. Something, however, still needed to be won. The absoluteness of sovereign love was too much conceived of as the love of an absolute sovereignty, and the path of missions was hedged up. The universal love of Christ, the passion for Christ, the obligation of the divine command interpreted in the light of Christ's sacrifice for mankind, broke anew and with clearer light upon select souls, and the church, made ready thus for missionary effort, found the gates of new empire opened.

This result may give relief to those who fear that the present expansion of thought with reference to Christ's personal relation to every generation and every individual of the human race will weaken the motive to missionary effort. When familiar dogmas are disappearing men are apt to think more of what is vanishing than of what is taking its place. If the present movement of thought adverse to the traditional limitations of Christ's saving work for men were a reduction of his claims, a lowering of the doctrine of the Incarnation or the Atonement or the final Judgment, there might be occasion for anxiety. But in reality it is only a larger appreciation of all these motives and powers of the gospel. It deepens the reasons for an absolute devotion to Christ, increases the sense of sin and of the greatness of his redeeming love, emphasizes the apostolic preaching of Christ crucified as the power of God and the wisdom of God. Negatively, it simply declines to affirm that

any soul to which this wisdom has not been revealed, and this power has not been applied, is *beyond the pale of redemption*, and that we can say that such motives are limited for all men by the opportunities of the present life. Positively, it is essentially an advance in the apprehension of what is a fundamental predicate of the gospel,—its ethical absoluteness. To suppose that progress in this direction, as it becomes apparent and is generally understood, will impair the claims of missions or retard their progress is to miss the lesson of history, and to take counsel of fear rather than of reason and Christian faith. The Apostle Paul instructs us from his own experience, as to what is the deepest and most potent motive to missionary effort; it is the constraining power of Christ's love, who "died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again." The church which beyond all others has trusted the simplicity and power of this motive has most thoroughly wrought into its membership the missionary idea. In his admirable lectures upon the "Moravian Missions," so careful and intelligent a historian as the Rev. A. C. Thompson, D. D., has affirmed: "If all Protestant churches had been equally devoted, equally enterprising, for the last century and a half, not an unevangelized man or woman would now remain on earth."

But some one may possibly suggest: all, then, that is necessary now for the promotion of interest

in missions is to urge the principles and maxims of Moravian piety. At least it is not desirable to propose any new theological questions. But this is to overlook two facts: Many Christians are not Moravians, and we are not raising any new questions. To gain in its fullness of power the central motive of the Christian life each division of the church must take it up for itself into the organic development of its own life. To each true church is given its own line of thought, its own sphere of duty, its special task, for the good of the whole and for a richer and broader unity. The questions we have touched upon in their bearing on missions are not first propounded by us. They are before the public. They come up in a movement already far advanced. They cannot be set aside nor suppressed. No greater mistake, as a matter of policy, could be made by the friends of missions than to seem to wish to avoid them. One of the most pathetic touches at the recent seventy-fifth Anniversary of the American Board was the allusion of a missionary to the fact that during the years of this Society's history two entire generations of heathen had passed away. What of the unnumbered generations, the innumerable millions, that have died without the gospel? Once, the advocates of missions had a definite answer. They will not repeat it. What will they say? What ought they to say? Our suggestion is, that they answer "according to Christianity."

And one word more upon this point. No prog-

ress is conserved save by allowing its principles scope and freedom of development. Any attempt to arrest their growth in apprehension or practical application is an expression of distrust in them, and tends to their overthrow. The church, having gained the doctrine of the universality of the Atonement, cannot stop with this advance. To do so would be to imperil what it has won. Nor, having once learned the lesson of a universal humaneness from the "philanthropy" "of God our Saviour,"¹ can it now close or dull its ear to this divine teaching without peculiar guilt. The Greek Church, in its centuries of sterility and decay, is a standing warning to any body of Christians that would decline to follow out the principles with which it is intrusted to their legitimate conclusions, and thus fail to conserve by progress.

It is a noteworthy and auspicious fact that the platforms of the older and the most important missionary societies are pledged by their history to all that is catholic in Christian belief and fellowship. We believe that missions should always be conducted in this large-minded and large-hearted spirit; that young men should be attracted to such service by the grandeur of its aim, and welcomed without scrutiny as to their theological opinions beyond what is necessary to ascertain their full acceptance of fundamental Christianity in their beliefs and in their consecration of purpose. We would raise, as a dividing question, no issue upon the mode

¹ Titus iii. 4.

in which God will administer his one system of redeeming grace in its application to those of his children who are born in the darkness of heathenism. But all the more are we strenuous that right opinions should prevail as to what the gospel is in its universality and completeness, and that no positions be taken which in the end will inevitably diminish men's convictions of its supreme authority and absolute necessity. And we believe that it is by the prevalence of truer conceptions of its universal character and relations, in connection with the providential opening of the world to its mission and the promised gift of the Spirit, that the coming century — may we not hope and expect, the next quarter of a century? — will show a progress in its extension beyond anything as yet realized. The thought is full of encouragement and stimulus, that through the various missionary societies, now well organized and conducted by men of large experience, the church to-day might lay a hand of power and blessing — as it were, the very benediction of Christ — on every island and continent of the globe. / All that is needed is the inspiration that alone can lift the church to the level of its opportunity. / Providence has been developing through the century the requisite organizations. It is now giving access to every field, however long closed and sealed. The continent of Africa is becoming as open to missions as to the sunlight. The remotest provinces of China will soon be in active commercial relations with Western civiliza-

tion. The islands of the Pacific and the continents of Asia and Africa will, ere long, be more thoroughly crossed and recrossed by routes of travel and traffic than was the Roman Empire when it was conquered by the early church. As never before the world is prepared for the gospel. Has the church a gospel for the world?

VIII.

THE SCRIPTURES.

WHAT is the Bible? How did this collection of writings come into existence? What are its distinctive predicates? Our inquiry assumes, of course, to be made by Christians, and to concern itself with one of the facts of a divinely established religion. It professes, therefore, to depend upon Christian sources for the information of which it is in search. We must begin by considering what those sources are. Evidently they consist, in part at least, of the great Christian facts of which the Bible bears witness. We know the immediate historical antecedents of the Scriptures, both in their outward appearance and in their higher significance. By them we can and must, to some extent, be guided in forming our conceptions of how the Scriptures were produced, and what they are. Are they to be our sole guide, or does Christianity furnish us other means of information to be used in connection with them? This is equivalent to asking whether Christianity professes to give us as immediate revelation information as to the way in which the Scriptures were produced, for evidently only information of this kind could take its place beside examination of the facts out of which they grew.

Some believe, it is true, that our religion, viewed as a whole in its divine character and supreme value, gives us the knowledge we are seeking. They contend that the book which should convey to men the essential content of such a religion must have been written in a certain way. For only so, they claim, could it have had the power of impression necessary to its task. We may be sure, therefore, that God made just such and such a Bible. The hope of reaching the goal we are seeking by this short cut may be tempting. But can it be indulged when one considers the assumption it involves as to man's ability to see all of the ways of procedure open to God in establishing his religion? How can any finite mind think itself so well acquainted with the sum of historical forces as to be able to declare just how a Bible must be produced which would best carry the gospel to the world? Some general predicates of the written vehicle of revelation might perhaps be assumed with measurable confidence, but not such as would satisfy the desire of the Christian mind and heart. Surely the surprises of God's providence should have by this time taught us our inability to predict just the means by which He will bring his ends to pass.

But we can know just what the Bible is from revelation, if we have a revelation about the matter. Is this in our possession? No; for the Scriptures (to Christians the depository of revelation, whatever else they may be) do not undertake to tell

how they arose, how they were collected into one sacred volume, or precisely what they are. The exact conception of their distinctive qualities which by general consent belongs to complete Christian knowledge they do not profess to give. We do not forget that some build on their interpretation of one familiar passage a different view from this. Paul affirms that "every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." That this implies that in the apostle's view the Old Testament Scriptures, whose canon was then settled, were inspired — or "God-breathed" — writings is evident. But it is also equally clear that the ascription to them of this predicate does not explain to us how they became entitled to it, or under what precise limitations it is applied to them. Nor can a large and all-inclusive declaration of this sort be accepted as determinative in respect to a multitude of special inquiries which every book of the Old Testament suggests, and which are essential to a true judgment as to its origin, nature, and value. Every book may be profitable for the purposes named by the apostle and have been divinely adapted to such ends, and still the question may remain unanswered as to the method of its production and the special place it occupies in the revelation of God's mind and will. We are therefore driven back to a study of these Scriptures, as well as of those of the later

Canon, in the historical evidences of their origin and nature.

Possibly, however, some may think that we have no right to assume that the antecedent facts fully account for the Bible, since, although it is unquestionably to a certain extent their product, a special operation of Almighty power, of which we are not informed, may have given to it its highest qualities. But surely in the absence of a clear revelation that such special divine power was employed, we have no right to assert its exercise. If without its use the Bible as it stands can be accounted for, it becomes unnecessary. And more than this ; is it not unreasonable, not to say irreverent, to add a new kind of divine activity to those of whose operation in establishing the kingdom of God sacred history assures us? Christian faith finds a revealing purpose of God in the manifest order and connections of that history. It infers from the teaching of prophet and apostle, and the words of One greater than they, that the events recorded took place in connection with such causes, natural and supernatural, as are presented in the sacred narrative, to the end that men might see behind the causes God disclosing his disposition towards man. Its conviction that this series of facts contains a divine object-lesson absolutely forbids it to try to improve the teaching by inventing other facts and thrusting them into the representation. It says, therefore, that if the forces visible in sacred history appear to the best human vision to have produced the Bible,

God must have wished men to believe that they did produce it.

We must seek, then, knowledge of the distinctive quality and value of the Scriptures by studying God's revelation given in history. A collection of literature is before us, — ideas and narratives conveyed by human minds to other minds in human language. As Christians we recognize qualities in these ideas and narratives which are wanting to other literature. We wish to obtain a knowledge of these qualities as exact as possible, and try to find out what distinguished their authors from other men that they could write such books. We know, too, from the historical knowledge which belongs to our faith that these writings were very intimately connected with the great revealing facts. We wish to see as clearly as we can what this connection was; in other words, the process by which fact-revelation made the Bible. We go back, therefore, to the places and times in which these Scriptures were composed, and see how they came to be written.

We must at the outset recognize the distinctness of the New Testament Scriptures from the Old. The question of the comparative religious value of their respective contents may be left in abeyance while we direct our attention to their historical diversity. They are parted by many centuries, they group themselves about different centres, they are unlike in structure and in language. Though they unite to form a higher unity, it is a unity made of

the wholes constituted by the union of each group. The first owes its value for the church to an event which followed its composition, the second to its having succeeded and been created by this same event. We must therefore approach them separately to find out how they came to be. The fact that the New Testament lies the nearer to us, and that we are better informed respecting the circumstances under which it was written, would naturally lead us to turn first to it, apart from any feeling we might have as to its greater value.

We naturally begin with its oldest books, the earliest literary product of the life of the apostolic church, the apostolic Epistles. They are chiefly pastoral letters, written to various Christian communities by their respective authors, who were in most cases the founders of the churches addressed. They belong to the apostolic teaching, and had for their immediate readers, and all future ones, just the claim which their authors had. Whatever is peculiar in their composition, or extraordinary in their value, is to be found in the apostolic teaching generally. For there is not a scintilla of evidence that God assumed to the minds of the apostles a new relation as soon as they sat down to write, and that, in consequence, what they wrote had a different quality from what they said. St. Paul sent a letter to the Galatians censuring them for falling away from the doctrine of justification by faith which they had received from him, and vehemently reasserting it as the central doctrine of the gospel.

It is absurd to suppose that he expected his readers to find in the written inculcation of the doctrine a divineness which they had not perceived in the oral presentation of it. "Why, then," they might have fairly asked, "does he blame us so severely for having lost our regard for it, since it was originally communicated to us in a more earthy and inadequate form?" And the tenor of the letter is entirely inconsistent with any such theory. It says that Paul's preaching is the utterance of the revelation of Christ, which he bore, and attaches to that preaching the whole weight of his apostolic authority. The presumption of the truthfulness of the oral teaching, and its supreme value, underlies the whole Epistle. The letter would have lost power by making its readers feel that it added to the essential content of the instruction. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." "Foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?" The same assumption of identity between the oral and written teaching is found in the other letters of Paul. He takes pains to assure the Corinthian church that he wields the apostolic spiritual force quite as resolutely and effectively in bodily presence as through the pen, — an assertion plainly incompatible with his believing that he gave a purer truth when he wrote. In the Epistle to the Romans he expresses the desire to visit his readers in order

to impart a spiritual gift, which even this crowning letter of his life would not bring to them. We should not dwell upon what seems to us so obvious but for the fact that the assumption of a special activity of the divine Spirit upon the apostles and other writers of Scripture in the act of composition, endowing what came from their pens with qualities possessed by no other Christian teaching, is a most fruitful source of confusion in the endeavor to find out what Scripture is. It is insisted not only that is there no evidence of such an act, but that the supposition of its existence is contrary to facts which lie on the face of the Scriptures. It is claimed that we have no more right to discriminate between the written and the oral teaching of Paul as different in kind than between those of any other public teacher. It is asserted that the peculiar and supernatural qualities which belonged to any one part of his teaching belonged essentially to it all. Not that those qualities dwelt in every part of it in the same degree. No doubt the stress of special circumstances or extraordinary impulses from the Spirit, or, still more likely, both, sometimes lent unusual clearness and penetration to his utterance of divine truth. Passages in some of his letters can be pointed out, to which Christian sentiment has always attached peculiar importance. Some of his Epistles are more elaborate, some more eloquent, some more complete in respect to the development of certain leading truths than others. Very likely he always put truth into a more com-

pact form when he wrote. But such incidental and formal peculiarities of his letters must be passed over if we are to ascertain what they really are. We must go back to the man from whom they came and study his situation, calling, and spiritual endowments.

He and his fellow apostles had personal acquaintance of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of them except Paul had known the mighty power of his personal influence and example, culminating in his passion. They had been taken possession of by the new divine life which poured down upon the world at Pentecost, and were "full of the Holy Ghost." Paul's case was different from theirs, yet not so different as at first appears. He knew Christ in person, for he saw Him before Damascus with his own eyes. That contact with the Lord on the outward plane of life, knowing Him to be the Lord, was, in its peculiar influence upon the spirit, the essential fact qualifying for apostleship. It gave a grasp of the fact of Incarnation, it gave a tension to Christian conviction which could come from nothing else. One must have seen the old dispensation passing over into the new to have the most vivid possible conviction that it had done so. One must have laid eyes upon Christ in order to have the freshest and most stimulating possible sense of his having been here. This the apostles had,—and they had besides the qualification for Christian preaching, only second to this, of having grown up as Jews. All the results of the divine revelation

and training in Judea were gathered up in their spiritual history. They could appreciate Christ in his connection with the past (without which the revelation made in Him was only a glorious fragment) as only Christian Jews could do.

These qualifications would have been of little service had they not been made effective by the supernatural gift imparted to their possessors. The apostles were the bearers of a revelation made immediately to each of them by the Spirit of God. Of the fact of such revelation they were conscious; by their consciousness of it the form of their teaching is moulded. We turn to their religious life and study this wonderful experience in the light of their own testimony, in the hope of gaining such a knowledge of it as shall lead to an adequate conception of the nature of the teaching which flowed from it.

The fundamental characteristic of the revelation borne by each apostle was its vitality. It was an essential part of the spiritual life. The gift received by the infant church on Pentecost was not merely the bestowal of this or that capacity; it was that of living in a new and higher way. Out of its quickened and mightily invigorated life leaped its new deeds of heroic devotion. From this fresh and ever-renewed fountain flowed its teaching. The apostles began to preach Christ because new conceptions of Him had come into their hearts, and were struggling for utterance there. A new type of teaching begins with Peter's Pentecostal sermon.

The essential elements of all distinctively Christian utterance are found in it. It is said to be the fruit of the new life. "The apostles gave their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Paul says that the revelation of Christ which was the source of his preaching, and the ground of its authority, was given in his conversion. "When it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, . . . I conferred not with flesh and blood," etc., etc. The light into which he was born was that from which he taught.

The revelation of which each apostle was the bearer is not, therefore, to be thought of as a set of religious ideas made over to him to be held as an external possession. The man could not be himself without having it; he could not give it without giving his life with it. For it was in essence a personal experience of Jesus Christ in and through whom he lived. God had made his consummated revelation of Himself in the Incarnation a glorious reality in this man's spirit. He appreciated the historic personality of Jesus Christ as a part of the divine life, and as having most vital relations to his own life and that of the world. He saw in it the consummation of the theocracy to which he had belonged, and the corner-stone of the new kingdom of God whose foundations he was laying. He recognized in it the fulfillment of prophecy and the key of history. Out of such a knowledge, a knowledge having its seat not in the mind merely or

chiefly, but in the whole renewed personality, the apostles preached and taught.

The vital nature of the knowledge is reproduced in the vitality of the teaching. This quality chiefly distinguishes the apostolic Epistles and the other distinctively spiritual books of sacred Scripture from all other Christian literature. Nothing else ever written shows personality so penetrated by the truth of Christ. You may try to draw out the teachings of one of John's Epistles into other forms of statement, and you will find your task as hopeless as the endeavor to extract just the perfume of the rose from its crushed petals. You may obtain another very pleasant odor, but not *that* fragrance. The truth in the Scripture statement has a delicate aroma which we find in the Scripture alone.

In saying that the apostolic teaching is the expression of the spiritual life of its authors and wears the impress of their respective personalities, we do not take one jot or tittle from its sacredness as a revelation. If God be pleased to convey truth to man in a way other than by the immediate contact of his Spirit with the individual human spirit, He must use some external medium, and if the communication is to be of a more connected and influential kind than that made by the sign language of nature, the medium employed must be in some sense human. It must, at least, be expressed in words which man has made to convey his ideas, and which partake, therefore, of the limitations and imperfections of those ideas. Now, if it should

please God to produce a book of oracles by sheer and stark miracle, or to dictate the contents of one to a scribe or number of scribes, the teaching would not come more directly from Him than when a soul in vital contact with Him freely utters, under the leading of his Spirit, the truth which is the element in which it lives. In this latter case He controls and shapes the teaching. Whatever of man is in it is there as his medium of expression. If it is given when the man in whom it dwells pleases, it is when God pleases, too, for the will of this organ of revelation is gladly responsive to God's life.

But we need not argue the case on the ground of *a priori* possibility; we have all that we contend for in the great Christian facts. The teaching of our Lord was his, and it was the Father's. To deny it any of the essential qualities of human teaching is simply to deny the essential qualities of his humanity and to reject the Incarnation. If it was the utterance of a human mind and heart, it shows that God can reveal himself through a human life; nay, that such a life is the best medium of his revelation, for there is no divineness in Christ's words which does not find expression through their humanity. And he who doubts that redeemed men can be so brought into the life of God that they, too, shall be worthy bearers of his revelation must deal with Christ's words: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." It is, therefore, with these

Scriptures as with the person of our Lord, the union of the divine and human in whom they imperfectly resemble and typify. To deny their essential humanity is to take away their divineness. For as the divine is subtracted from Christ by removing from Him the human soul which is its dwelling-place and point of contact with man, so a mechanical view of man's agency in revealing divine truth implies the denial of a living connection of God with the Christian life. — yes. — and the denial of the central fact on which that life rests.

We do not urge this as defending a theory of the nature of Scripture which is on trial before the bar of speculative reason, but to take away any lingering unwillingness to look at the plain facts of the case. For the humanity of the Scripture is so apparent that no one can help finding in it the freely evolved product of its authors' religious life, whose eyes are not holden by dogmatic prejudice. The apostolic letters are preëminent in literature for the degree in which they wear the stamp of their authors' individuality.

And this we regard an essential condition of their unequaled excellence. Our reverence for man is such that we can easily believe the best medium for conveying God's truth to the world to be a human life filled and inspired by this truth. And when we come under the influence of the apostolic letters we feel that their vitality penetrating the truth is of the very essence of their disclosing power. It is not so much that we draw

ideas about God out of them, as that we touch God himself in them, because the life with which they palpitate is fed in its central springs by his own. It is not merely in what they say that they reveal God to us, but in what they suggest. The Christian conception of things in general, of men living together in God through Christ and for Christ, a society in the world and destined to possess the whole of it, yet not of the world, — what this means viewed from the interior and central point of vision, what this means when not only seen but felt in every fibre of the being, — all this, which we could not find in mere didactic utterance, we do find in the apostolic revelation.

Then, too, the variety furnished by the personal element in the teaching of the apostles contributes fullness and richness to the revelation. It is God that is to be revealed; a life flowing out upon a sinful race in redeeming and self-communicating love; a life rich and manifold beyond conception in its connections with the life of man.

The Incarnation is the essential revelation: but the Incarnation is more than the presence of the man Christ Jesus on earth, and the things he did and suffered. This the unbelieving Jews had. It is the fact of union between the divine and the human, the awful “mystery of godliness;” it is the relation of this union to the life of man and the life of God. It must take place before man can know God. Man cannot know it when it has taken place unless he have God’s help. “In Christ

are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

The Spirit showed the things of Christ unto his apostles. The revelation must shape itself to the personality of each recipient. That which is revealed in Christ is God in his work of redemption; and, because the knowledge gained is vital knowledge, it must vary with the temperament of each writer, for each human soul is by its constitution especially fitted to appropriate certain elements of God's character and to appreciate the revelation of these made in his treatment of the world. Hence Paul's apprehension of God in Christ could not be identical with John's. Again, we appeal to fact, and insist that the subtle diversity of the apostolic teaching is as undeniable as its fundamental unity. The writings of John add no new doctrine to that given in the Pauline letters: but if they were blotted out the Christian revelation would lose a very precious element—the Johannean conception of the gospel, preëminent for ethical depth and force. No other mind could so present Christianity as a fellowship of God with man in holy love. Through no other medium does the truth come with such splendor as when it streams through this transparent spirit. We hold with Neander that Paul, John, Peter, and James (whom we may be permitted to class among the apostles), each represents a distinct and permanent type of character, and that, in making each the bearer of a separate revelation, the design of God to give men a conception of the

truth in Jesus rich in its manifoldness is distinctly manifest.

It will be asked, "If the revelation partake of the characteristics of the man through whom it is given, must it not share his imperfection?" If by imperfection be meant such defect of character as is implied in the lack of ideal symmetry, we answer, Yes. The many years spent in Pharisaic bondage must have left an abiding influence upon St. Paul's character; for grace cannot miraculously obliterate slow moral growths. We could not but expect that his bitter experience should have led him to find in the doctrine of justification by faith a relative prominence which it would not wear to any who had not borne a chain like his. But this feature of his apprehension of the gospel is not its weakness, but its strength, because it is seen to belong to the man, and to be implied in the experience which fitted him as no one else could be fitted to declare the gospel of righteousness through faith.

If the question mean, "Must not such sin as still dwelt in the apostles have tinged their religious conceptions and teaching with error?" — we reply, This could not have been unless they were more under the influence of moral evil than we have any reason to suppose them to have been. The effect of sin upon the perceptive faculties lags behind its influence upon the will. Men usually know better than they do. The best of men are the most penitent, for the elevation of their moral standard outstrips even their improvement in conduct.

We cannot, therefore, correctly measure the purity of the religious conceptions which the apostles had, by comparing their lives with the absolute standard of human goodness. That their teaching was not vitiated by such moral defects as still clung to them is plainly shown by the fact that the most conspicuous fault committed by any one of them after Pentecost, so far as our knowledge goes, and one which bore the closest relations to the transgressor's conception of a vital religious truth, was not reflected in his teaching. Nothing in Peter's Epistles would lead one to infer that he had dissembled to the Judaizers at a critical juncture in the history of the church.¹

We can hardly believe, indeed, that the truth as revealed through the apostles had such absolute purity as we must suppose it to have had if perfect beings had been the media of revelation. We must recognize a certain quality in the words of our Lord, — a brilliant and serene lustre, a perfectness of proportion, which we cannot find even in theirs. We sometimes discover in their successive letters signs of progress into more adequate conceptions; as, for example, in Paul's teachings concerning marriage. In some rare cases one side of a truth is so frankly presented that only by finding a correlate elsewhere are we saved from misconception; as in James's teaching concerning justification. But the slight blemishes in the very finest optical instruments do not prevent our obtaining from them data which to the human mind of finest train-

¹ Ladd, *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, ii. 424.

ing are exceedingly exact ; and when we recollect that the imperfection of the organ of revelation is the correlate of qualities which give especial fitness to reveal God's truth to man, we may dismiss the question of absolute perfection in the apostolic teaching as having no living interest. Christ knew the sort of revelation which would come through Paul and John when He chose them to reveal Him, and we must rest content with his selection.

The views of Christ and of his truth contained in the apostolic Epistles must, from the nature of the case, always shape the religious and moral conceptions of the church. Not that they alone possessed the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in every soul in which He dwells, and there have been some souls in ages since the apostolic into which He has so abundantly shed the radiance of God's truth that they have been the spiritual luminaries of their own and following centuries. But in this matter of revelation man is never isolated from his fellow. God has so made us that every one in the brotherhood of believers must receive spiritual light from his fellow man in the very act of receiving it from above. The prophets were dependent upon the conceptions of God given to their predecessors ; the apostles were continually drawing knowledge from the Old Testament Scriptures and from the words of Christ. No teacher in the church has ever arisen or can ever arise so filled with the Spirit as not to depend upon the apostles for conceptions of

God. We can see that their situation and their exceptionally exalted life make following teachers dependent upon them as they were not dependent upon any predecessor except Christ; that their conceptions of our Lord are the framework into which all the subsequent thoughts of his church about Him and his work must be set, and the norm by which the teaching of the church must shape itself.

This follows of necessity from their historical relation to the Incarnation. They were living links by which God Incarnate was joined to the life of the world. That the world might know Him in the divine humanity, there must be some men intimate with Him, whose personal acquaintance should be expanded and purified by the inner revelation of the Spirit, so that they could tell the world who it was that they had known. "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life . . . declare we unto you also." The relations in which the apostles stood to the previous history of the world and to its contemporaneous life were a part of their peculiar qualification for presenting Christ to mankind. He stood in such immediate connection with the past that no one could adequately know Him who did not know the facts of which He was on the human side a part. Judaism was in its flower in Him, and no one could fully know this part of Him who did not know Judaism

from the inside. He was the explanation of the relation which the Hebrew nation bore to the life of the race, and no one could adequately give the explanation who did not know by personal experience the strength and the weakness of Hebraism. In a word, the Incarnation is not really apprehended until it is apprehended in its historical setting, and only those who saw that setting with their own eyes could worthily describe it. We add to these qualifications that of preëminent endowment of the Holy Spirit. We would gladly cherish the thought that other teachers might arise, from whom should flow even more copious streams of living water than those which welled from the hearts of the apostles. But we are compelled to regard the circumstances of their lives as excluding such a hope. We cannot think the gift of the Spirit a sheer miracle of power. We must believe that as a bestowal of the divine life it has its appropriate and essential conditions in mutual relations existing between the human life and the divine. And we cannot help believing that the conditions of its bestowment existed in a degree absolutely unique in the days just following the resurrection of our Lord; that after the amazing act of divine love for man then consummated there should follow immediately a surpassing influx of divine life into the world; that the divine humanity of Jesus should, through the Spirit, have its most intense power upon the race at its point of historic contact with it. The church, we believe, has always felt and will always

feel that there can never be another Pentecost, as there can never be another Calvary.

For these reasons we hold that the conceptions of Christ presented in the apostolic revelation are not only the most vivid, but the most comprehensive and the most just which any minds in this stage of being can have. We believe that these men were so placed and so gifted that they saw Christ's nature and relations to man with both more penetrating and broader vision than that of any other seers; that the main features of his life and mission, the truths of his eternal being, the outlines of his historical relations, were mirrored in their minds with such just perspective that we must seek all our knowledge of Christ within the limits and under the outlines of their teaching. The church is ever adding to its knowledge of Christ, and the exegetical process is certainly not the exclusive means of making the increment. Out of mere study of books did not come its growing knowledge of Christ's relation to God, and to mankind, nor its conception of the breadth of his redeeming work. Such a product shows the revealing presence of the Spirit. But in making the revelation He has used, as the facts show, He could not but use, as the Christian reason shows, the apostolic teaching as the constant medium of revelation, the ever-present helper and guide of the advancing mind. The greatest thinkers of the church have found themselves in all their thinking, in closest sympathy with and dependence upon the apostolic teaching.

They have been able to carry out its conceptions of Christ into fuller form and more intricate connections. They have never been able to correct one of those conceptions, nor to place another beside them in the inner circle of revelation. It is the fulfillment of Christ's promise to lead his apostles into the whole truth. It is the authority of his representatives bearing its own credentials in the supreme sway which their words wield over the Christian mind.

What, now, of the historical books of the New Testament? They are true narratives in which the facts described appear in spiritual content as well as outward form. The synoptic Gospels contain the apostolic tradition about Christ, gathered from various sources and wrought into narratives, in each of which a deep religious appreciation of his Person and mission is evident. The historical proof connecting the sayings and acts of our Lord with the recollections of the apostolic circle is unimpeachable. Christian faith confirms it, declaring that the character showing itself in these deeds and words can be no other than that of the superhuman person whom it calls Lord. The subtle blending of the materials before each evangelist into a delineation of our Lord's life in one of its leading relations to the life of man shows that each worked from a vivid conception of Christ given by the revealing Spirit.

Of purely miraculous communication to these writers of any of their material, there is no evi-

dence. We may well believe that the spiritual exaltation of the apostolic circle in the early days of the church would bring back to their recollection the words of their Master with preternatural vividness. We must also recollect that their spiritual sympathy with Christ's teachings would certainly prevent them from attributing to Him any teaching or deed not worthy of his character. We have here ample guaranty of the essential accuracy of the apostolic tradition. If we cannot predicate its absolute perfection, if we must attribute some deviation from accuracy even to the process of translation from Aramaic into Greek, we must remember that this living way of preserving our Lord's sayings and deeds gives these memoirs the simplicity and artlessness and lifelikeness in which they far surpass all other biographies. What has been said of the synoptic Gospels may be said of the Acts. There is not the slightest internal or external reason for pronouncing it a history set down from miraculous divine dictation. It claims to be a continuation of Luke's Gospel, and probably rests in part, like that, upon earlier documents. It is to be regarded as true to the facts and the life in the facts. It could only have been written by one taught by the Spirit to know the events narrated in their true meaning and value.

Of St. John's Gospel, written to show the outlines of Christ's life as it lay transfigured in the mind of the beloved apostle, the divine glory streaming through every word and deed, we have only to

say that in it lie two distinct elements of divine knowledge, the two most precious of all, the teaching of the Master and of the most spiritual of his disciples. We need not stay to discuss the remaining books of the New Testament Canon. The church has placed them beside the apostolic writings because it has believed them to possess the apostolic qualities. That no other ground can be successfully urged for the right of an anonymous scripture like the Epistle to the Hebrews to a place in the Canon is evident. That the general consensus of the church in the canonicity of this or any writing has the strongest claim to respect, all Christians will admit. That the judgment so given can add nothing to the intrinsic value of such a letter, all Protestants must hold. But they also agree in believing it the best of reasons for devoutly seeking in such a writing the mind of Christ.

We cannot extend our inquiry to the Old Testament. The quantity of material to be dealt with here is so great, and the unsolved problems so numerous and intricate, that any attempt to show the nature of its structure from the correlated facts, not covering many more pages than are left to us, would be absolutely worthless.

We feel the limitation the more keenly from our conviction that just here the claims of our method need especial vindication. A fault in discussions about the nature of Scripture, which has been, perhaps, more insnaring than almost any other, is the

habit of drawing its predicates from the study of the New Testament alone. We must make our protest against this practice by heartily acknowledging that our work is defective according to the standard which we have ourselves set up. One cannot fitly answer the question "What is the Bible?" until he has examined the contents of each Canon. He has no more right to characterize an Old Testament Scripture from any New Testament Scripture than to regard the office of a Hebrew prophet as identical with that of an apostle of Jesus Christ. What though he may recognize in the genesis of either composition a supernatural element? He has no more right to say that the patent historical differences do not enter into the very nature of the writing than that Paul's work and Isaiah's were essentially the same.

The practice of interpreting the Old Testament by assumed New Testament canons has made the former seem lifeless and unintelligible, and caused many of the more inquiring minds of the church to cease trying to gain an intelligent and comprehensive knowledge of its contents. This has wrought the great mischief of impairing the church's knowledge of Holy Scripture, the New Testament as well as the Old; not only because the New cannot be understood except through the help of the Old, but because the Old Testament rightly studied gives a weapon with which to break the crust of formalism which had grown upon the New. The thorough investigation of the former now go-

ing on under the spur of rationalistic criticism will, under God, result in a new examination of the latter in its historical connections which will give a great impulse to Christian thought and life.

While we cannot attempt to give even in outline the fresh conception of the Old Testament Scriptures in their relation to the earlier revelation, which later scholarship is creating, we cannot leave unnoticed the especial objections to the use of the historic method upon them which just now are influential with some minds, lest we be suspected of trying to escape difficulties. One of these grows out of the belief that Christ's authority is committed to a certain view of the authorship of the Old Testament. "It is not necessary, it is not reverent, to undertake to find out by searching that which He has already taught us." We are obliged to deny the assumed fact. Christ, we believe, did not undertake to teach his disciples what the Old Testament was *as Scripture*, that is, to show how as written composition it is related to the revelation of which it gives information. He did wish himself to be understood, we cheerfully admit, as regarding the sacred writings of the Jews as the depository not only of instructive fact, but of religious teaching which had a peculiar connection with the divine mind; but He has neither taught nor intimated the existence of any special kind of connection between revelation and authorship. We shall be reminded of his saying that David spoke in the Spirit when he called Him Lord. But it

surely does not follow, from his teaching that a Messianic Psalm was written under immediate divine impulse, that He held all the books of the Old Testament to have been composed under similar conditions. Nor does He say what relation the Psalm bears to the special revelation given to its author, whether it was dictated to him, or he was left to work out his inspired conception into literary form by conscious elaboration; whether the contents of the Psalm came in one moment of exaltation, or had long lain in his mind.

“But certainly,” it may be said, “when our Lord told the Pharisees that ‘the Scripture cannot be broken’ (λύω), He lent his authority to a certain conception of its composition. For to say that its every statement carries divine authority is to say that the divine mind so immediately controlled the action of all the human minds employed in producing it that its authorship is simply God’s act.” The argument rightly assumes that such a divine sanction of each statement made by these Scriptures implies a specific way of writing them; namely, by setting down words divinely dictated. But we cannot accept the construction thus put upon this saying of Christ. For it would make the saying flatly contradictory of those other teachings in which He criticises and amends certain statements of the Old Testament as to men’s moral obligation. They are as plainly a part of its teaching as the profounder spiritual teaching of the Psalms. We feel confident, therefore, that our

Lord meant no more by the words under discussion than an explicit recognition of the Old Testament Scriptures as the source of spiritual knowledge for the Jewish nation.

Another cause of repugnance to the historical way of finding out what the Old Testament is (one very effective, we believe, with Christians who are not professional students) is the assumed insufficiency of the data. "We are so far from the events which produced even the very latest of the Hebrew Scriptures; no treatise has come down to us which throws such light upon the circumstances and conditions of their authorship as the Acts throws upon that of the apostolic Epistles; the range which they unitedly traverse is so immense; there is so little in the books themselves that reveals their structure, — it is hopeless to try to infer from them and from what they say how they came to be written." Yes, to infer as much as we know about the genesis of the Epistle to the Romans. But many of these Scriptures only deal with historical facts, often lying remote from the author's life and ascertained from secondary sources. These obviously have comparatively little that is subjective to be accounted for. But we find in the phenomena even of these writings ground for certain large and definite inferences concerning the relation of their respective authors to the facts narrated, and to the great spiritual fact of which every event in the history of the Hebrew people was a part. We may safely infer from them that

a book which describes the death of Moses was not, all at least, written by Moses; that a narrative which contains two accounts of the creation was made — to some extent, at any rate — by editing ancient documents; and that an exalted prediction of the Messianic kingdom was not written in the same spiritual condition with that in which a compilation of proverbs was made. And, speaking generally, the phenomena of these Scriptures furnish sufficient data for ascertaining the internal relation in which their respective author or authors stood towards the divine revelation carried in the advancing life of the Hebrew nation. For these writings all breathe the religious spirit. Even those of them which deal exclusively with historical events describe those events with devout aim and pious feeling. The collection of national proverbs reflects a mind which viewed earthly prudence chiefly from a religious standpoint. And so far as an author shows a religious apprehension of the events of which he treats, and especially of those of them with which he is in immediate contact, so far of course does it appear that the revealing Spirit dwelling in and fostering the national life has made him its especial organ. The revelation which God made in Israel consisted, as another has well said, of two distinct elements: national experiences, and the interpretation of these experiences by men gifted with supernatural insight into the meaning of Jewish history. It is the judgment of the Christian church that the Old Tes-

tament historians show the possession of this gift, so preëminently displayed by the great prophets. We infer, then, the spiritual endowment of the author from his work, as in the case of the author of the third Gospel and the Acts. Finding God's revealing purpose in the facts as he tells them to us, we find it especially manifest in the disposition of the narrating mind.

The distinctness with which the prophetic books reveal the historical function and the religious life of their respective authors hardly needs to be pointed out. That conception of the prophet which regarded him as merely a voice, uttering words which his own inner life had no share in producing, is rapidly disappearing before the intelligent study of the Old Testament. We are finding out that the seat of the prophetic teaching was the moral and religious nature of the inspired seer, alone. Studying the national exigencies which called out the teaching of the greater prophets, and entering into the historical relations of their words, we have felt ourselves entering into the spirit of the writings as we became acquainted with the writers. It is not denied that they were sometimes evidently conscious of receiving special messages from God. Nor would we claim that the conceptions of God's kingdom in its present state and coming development, given them by the Spirit, were so fully wrought into their own thinking as the apostles' conceptions of Christ and his kingdom were united with their own thought. Just

here is the inferiority of the earlier stage of revelation shown, in that the supernatural revelation had not fully penetrated and appropriated the natural faculties even of those in whom God's Spirit dwelt most fully. But it is claimed that the prophetic teaching was, like the apostolic, essentially pervaded by its authors' personality, and that in proportion as we find ourselves discovering God's mind in this teaching, we find it informing and illumining the mind of the prophet. This shows us that we have only to go on learning more fully what each prophet was, in his work for his people and his devotion to his people's God, to learn more fully the distinctive quality of his teaching. All the information we need as to the special relation his writings and those of his fellow prophets respectively bore to the divine revelation to Israel, and bear to the larger revelation given to the Christian church, lies before us in the Old Testament, if only we are not too indolent or too deeply prejudiced to seek it there.

How plainly the self-revealing power of Scripture appears in the Psalms! What does the church really care for a theory as to the way in which they were produced? It hears the music of God's voice speaking in the hearts whose penitence, doubt, aspiration, gratitude, joy, they express, and knows that they came from Him. It is pure scholasticism to try to find an explanation of the fifty-first Psalm in any other thing than the heart whose penitence pulses through it. And the Messianic

Psalms will tell what they mean, and how God revealed himself in them, if we will not insist upon inventing a theory as to how they were made and trying to get out of them an interpretation which justifies this theory.

A third and yet more influential source of unwillingness to rely on historical methods for knowledge of what the Old Testament writings specifically are, is the belief that the free use of this method (and it is rightly assumed that any use of it implies the right to use it freely) imperils religious interests. It is rightly felt that problems of authorship cannot be solved without attempting the solution of the historical problems underlying them, and it is said that scholars in trying to solve the latter may draw from the phenomena of the Old Testament conclusions prejudicial to the trustworthiness of some of its writings, and so give Christian faith (one of whose vital elements is confidence in all of them as essentially truthful) a deadly wound.

This objection implies either that those who raise it have no faith in the capacity which historical science supposes itself to possess of reaching sound conclusions, or that they do believe that it has this capacity, and fear that if it were employed upon the Old Testament Scriptures, it would draw from them conclusions perilous to Christian faith. The latter alternative is ruled out by our conviction that we are addressing heartily believing minds. Taking the former, we ask why it should be thought

that the pursuit of historical science is an insnaring process, and that historical scholars must be dupes? Why pass such a judgment upon this single one of the departments of investigation?

Do we find any reason in the nature of its subject for assuming that the mind of man, which acts rationally in contact with other themes, will become insane as soon as it approaches this one? Surely there seems to be no reason why men should all have a mental disease showing itself just here. Do we find, then, on examining the work of historical students, that its manifest (though unaccountable) irrationality shows that the human mind cannot safely touch this class of subjects? No one can answer the question in the affirmative without folly who has not mastered the critical and constructive methods which modern history has fashioned, and gained extensive knowledge of its employment of them. Whoever has closely watched the application of those methods to Hebrew history will know that the process has not been irrational. He will have seen a progressing accumulation of significant facts and successive deductions steadily advancing in clearness and adequacy to explain the facts. As in other departments of science, he will have seen theory replacing theory as the facts have become better known and their mutual relations more clearly perceived. And we venture to affirm that if he be not prevented by prejudice from giving to the operations of the human mind in this department of knowledge such confidence as he

bestows on its action when applied to other departments, or to the conduct of affairs, he will conclude that the facts noted are not will-of-the-wisps, but real facts ; that the principles used in accounting for them have been rational principles, and that in applying principles to facts steady progress has been made towards sound conclusions.

We are speaking now, as throughout the discussion, from the Christian point of view, and assuming that those who are examining this class of facts have no inaptitude for perceiving the spiritual realities immediately connected with them. Of the scholars who have sought to give these facts scientific construction, some have made a presentation widely at variance with the conception of Hebrew history which belongs to Christian writers. But these writers avowedly maintain a mental attitude towards all that claims to be supernatural which is not that of Christianity. We regard ourselves as justified in suspending judgment as to their conclusions, in the suspicion that this mental bias may have warped their treatment of the facts, until the case shall have been fully tried before the bar of science. This position was taken by evangelical scholarship a half century ago with regard to Strauss's plausible construction of the phenomena of the Gospels, and eventually the correctness of the Christian presumption was abundantly proved, and Strauss's treatment of the facts shown to be unscientific. Biblical science can fairly ask for a similar suspension of judgment respecting rational-

istic treatment of the Old Testament Scriptures. It does not think that its methods can be more fairly distrusted because some have used them imperfectly (as it hopes to show) than those of physical science can be impugned because some great biologists have believed that they could establish materialism by scientific treatment of vital facts. The attitude taken towards Old Testament studies in some quarters is but a denial of the claims of historical science. Those who adhere to and preach this intellectual Sadduceeism in doing so are fighting against Christianity, which in all its appeal to the human mind justifies man's confidence in his own faculties. They might easily have learned from the experience of the church that attempts to make man believe science an impossibility must inevitably result in discrediting any system or faith in whose behalf they are made.

We must not assume that the prejudice felt by many towards the scientific study of the Old Testament is due entirely to the distinctive positions of rationalistic scholars. It must be owned that the leading evangelical students of the Old Testament who belong to the progressive school suggest changes in the ordinary conception of Hebrew history, which, in the judgment of some, Christian faith cannot consent to make. But until it has been clearly shown that Christian faith is irrevocably committed to the entire correctness of the traditional view of the development of the Hebrew life, the prejudice has no sound foundation. The

revision of the ancient interpretation of such passages of the Old Testament as lie next the domain of physical science should make us very slow to believe that advancing historical inquiry may not require a similar modification of our view of Old Testament history. "But our implicit acceptance of Christ's teachings is an essential part of Christian faith." Yes, and has evangelical Biblical science come into antagonism with any teaching of Christ in its assertions about the composition or structure of the Old Testament? "He has ascribed the Pentateuch to Moses, and the later chapters of Isaiah to the prophet called by that name." No, He has made no such ascription. He has in quotation followed the Jewish habit of naming the book from its reputed author. It is a fair question as to whether, in the act of speaking, the person of the author was before his mind. Certainly He had no thought of making the fact of authorship a part of his teaching. One might as well claim that a minister commits himself to the view that all the book ascribed to Isaiah was written by that prophet, in saying to a congregation that he will read a chapter from the book of Isaiah. And even if one is convinced that our Lord accepted the traditional view of the authorship of the books in question, he cannot hold that His authority is committed to that view until he has satisfied himself that Christ claimed to be omniscient during the days of his humiliation, — a belief irreconcilable with his own declaration that He

knew neither the day nor the hour of his second coming.

“But has not Christ wrought into his teaching the great facts of Hebrew history, and thereby committed Christianity to a certain construction of that history?” To the great constructive principles of Hebrew history as given in the Old Testament, and to certain large facts in which those principles are embodied, he has certainly committed it. Indeed, his personality implies, as its antecedent on the human side, such a national life and religious faith as we find depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures. But it has not been shown, we believe that it cannot be shown, that the traditional conception of Hebrew history in its details finds a sanction in the teachings of Christ. Who can maintain that He directly or indirectly taught that all the Pentateuchal legislation was given in Moses’s time? Who can find in his words light as to the real nature of the change in the national life which caused the establishment of the monarchy? Clearly, Christian faith must leave the settlement of such questions to historical scholarship. It has no reason to fear any conclusions to which science may come respecting those sacred facts, for it knows its own life to be something which human opinions did not create, and which, therefore, no change of human thinking can destroy. Any conceptions of history which are essential to its life it knows must be true, since God who has revealed himself to it through the medium of these conceptions cannot lie. Therefore it should

cordially welcome all the endeavors of science to make a clearer and more complete representation of its oldest historical sources, believing that so its connection with them will be made more apparent. This is the attitude which, as we have already intimated, the enlightened part of the church has taken towards critical inquiry into the sources of our knowledge concerning the events of the life of Christ and those of his apostles. The central pillar of its confidence that the apostolic picture of our Lord was a true representation, was the assurance that God who had presented Christ to its heart as it gazed on the portrait, and had so begotten it into new life, would not have deceived it in giving the assurance that this and no other was its Lord. Supported by this conviction, it welcomed the most searching scrutiny into the historical sources of its faith. The examination was thorough and unsparing, and as its result the church has gained such respect from the best human thinking, and such mastery of the precious facts which belong most intimately to its life, as make it feel itself indebted to historical science, under God, for some of its noblest possessions. It will gain like benefit from the present study of the sources of Hebrew history, if only it would maintain the same fearless attitude.

We can, then, without hesitation commit ourselves to the study of the Old Testament writings for our knowledge of their authorship, of their peculiarities as literature, and the relation they re-

spectively bear to the religious life of the Hebrew people, and to the divine revelation which that life contains. This inquiry involves, of course, the study of the historic revelation which lies back of these Scriptures, and of which they are products, just as the study of the New Testament Scriptures involves the study of the revelation borne by their respective authors and expressing itself in them. This assumption of spiritual principles running through the events of Hebrew history and joining them into one teaching implies that conception of human history, as shaped by God to ends of revelation and redemption, which the human mind has received from Christianity. Here, as throughout our discussion, we assume the truth of the Christian view of God in his relations to man. The Christian belief that Christ is the culmination of God's historic revelation implies such a conception of Hebrew history as our Lord himself had. This must underlie Christian study of the Old Covenant Scriptures. To know the ancient dispensation as the *Old* Covenant is to know it as both preparatory of and explained by the New. To study its Scriptures in their larger relation to its life is to study them in their relation to the purpose which shaped that life.

To try to know the Old Covenant revelation without seeking its completion in Christ is like examining a tree in midwinter. The various parts of the organism cannot be understood until that appears for which the organism exists. And the

dignity of each element of this revelation can be rightly estimated from the Christian point of view alone. If Christ is the supreme and final revelation He is the test of all preceding revelation. If we accept Him as God's supreme and final revelation, we must bring preceding revelation to this test. We cannot escape the process of comparison if we would. He brings us his own conception of God, of life, of duty. It claims to cover the whole horizon of truth, and demands possession of every spiritual and rational faculty. If we will have it as ours we must hold it separate from and above every other. Whatever else comes to us as from God must present its credentials to Christ's truth in our mind and hearts. This is not only the teaching of Christian faith ; it is the teaching of Christ. When He told us that certain precepts of the law were to be replaced by spiritual maxims more in harmony with the nature of God, He taught us to apply Christian principles to all the law and prophets, and to regard all in them which is not consistent with those principles as superseded by the new revelation. For no one thinks, surely, that when He made exceptions to certain provisions of the Mosaic code, He merely amended a law which whenever not amended holds good. Such an interpretation would commit his authority to the eternal validity of the sacrificial system. No ; we must with our Lord recognize a progress in revelation, and not attempt to find in Old Testament saints, even the loftiest spirits of them all, those

fuller and purer conceptions of God and his ways which were brought into the world by the Incarnation. And if we do not expect to find them in the men, we shall not feel ourselves compelled to distort facts in the endeavor to find them in the books which the men wrote.

Such use as we have been able to make of what we contend to be the one method of finding out what the Bible is will have disappointed some of our readers by not including a precise definition of inspiration, or the activity of God upon the mind communicating Christian truth or fact. But such a definition is not needed to explain sacred Scripture, and indeed cannot be adequate to the facts, both because the activity in question is not separable as to kind from God's supernatural action in creating and sustaining a regenerate life, and as a vital fact partakes of the mystery which belongs to that life; and because it is not, in point of degree, a constant quality, but varies with the individual through whom truth is communicated, and the changing conditions of his life and work. We have never seen a definition of inspiration which was rooted in the realities of sacred history, not one which did not seem to us an attempt to infer a cause for the Bible from such a product as the inventor desired to see in sacred Scripture. While we no more venture to try to make one than to define the relation of God's activity to the inspired words of Christ, and do not think that the Bible, as a most complex and varied series of facts, can

be compassed in a definition, we do not hesitate to try to put as much of our conception of it as we can into a sentence. The Bible is the representation in writing of God's historical revelation of himself to man, which has come immediately from that revelation as it passed through its successive stages. We see the revealing and redeeming purpose of God most strikingly manifested in the fact that the unique events in which He disclosed himself have left as their products documents which bear their immediate impress. In the Scriptures themselves, regarded as sacred compositions, in their unparalleled moral and religious power and beauty, we recognize the outgoing of that inspired life which is the especial medium of his revelation. In the living unity into which their contents, so rich in variety, blend, we recognize the reflection of that redeeming purpose which underlies and shapes all the events of which they bear record. That the principle of that unity is Jesus Christ, that Scripture is felt to be a whole in that its teachings blend in showing Him in his historical relations and spiritual function, we regard as the reflection of God's purpose to make this theanthropic Person the centre of the divine revelation to man. That a multitude of providential and spiritual agencies, the period of whose operation extends through many centuries, should have united in the production of this unity, we regard as affording the most vivid illustration of the control of history by God for his redemptive purpose.

We do not deny that the immediate connection of sacred Scripture with the living facts of revelation has caused it to bear some of the imperfections inherent in the nature of those facts so far as they belong to the life of man. This we see to be incident to the method of God's revelation, and the permanent fixing of that revelation in contemporaneous Scripture. We can trust Him for the excellence of the method. Nay, we can gratefully recognize his adorable wisdom in selecting it; since the Bible, which brings the living reflection of his self-revealing acts, is, in its reality and freshness, far more effective in putting men into contact with those acts than a perfect description of them miraculously dictated could have been. We not only claim that this our conception of the Scriptures is lacking in no element of reverential regard for them, since it presents them in their immediate contact with the realities which most deeply stir the Christian heart, and as the only means by which those realities are known, but we further claim that it is the only Scriptural conception. One who insists that the church view of Scripture must be derived from a source outside Scriptural facts is in this very thing unscriptural, unless he can produce some immediate declaration from the Bible as to its own nature, which declaration we affirm, as at the beginning, cannot be produced. We must, therefore, take the Biblical facts, to all Christians confessedly divine and revealing, as our guide in this matter, or be in spirit anti-Biblical.

For the fear that the aggressive power of Christianity would be lessened by the general prevalence of this conception of Scripture, we confess ourselves to have little respect. Christianity can never lose headway by coming into truer conceptions of anything. God will not let it suffer from finding out what the Bible is, and telling men what it is. And its procedure in gaining men's hearts must be simply preaching Christ. If it be said that the preaching, in its full sense, implies satisfying the mind that He is indeed the Christ, we answer that men sadly hamper themselves in their endeavor to do this by undertaking to establish, as the necessary postulate of his divine nature and mission, the perfection of a book whose chief ground to confidence is its connection with Him and manifest possession of his truth.

Christian Apologetics has enough work to do in proving Christ to reluctant minds, by moral and spiritual data, without entangling itself in such an absurd procedure as this.

We might go further, and insist that the antagonistic view of a perfect book, produced by an assumed series of miracles, superadded to the supernatural events in which God's historical revelation was made, a book to whose every statement the divine authority is committed, weakens Christianity by bringing it into collision with historical and physical science. But this argument we will not press. For the issue is to be decided, not by exhibiting consequences, but by weighing facts.

IX.

CONCLUSION. — CHRISTIANITY ABSOLUTE AND UNIVERSAL.

THE preceding series of theological papers has been a discussion of the principal doctrines of the gospel, in order to recognize some of the lines along which advancing Christian thought has more recently been moving. We have considered the Incarnation, the Atonement, Eschatology, the Work of the Holy Spirit, the Christian, and the Bible, to discover in what respects clear and positive improvement has been made on statements of belief which once had general currency. We have not pretended to create a theology, but only to modify or to enlarge established doctrines. When we have used the term New Theology it has been only as a convenient designation of a fresh movement in theological thought, only as the symbol of a quickening which we share in common with many others. In the exact use of terms there can, of course, at this late day, be no such thing as a new theology. We are not so silly as to suppose that modern religious thought is independent of an ancestry. Sturdy growth has old roots. The truth we study has engaged earnest thought throughout

the Christian centuries. We have only attempted to show the directions in which generally accepted principles are pushing on to new and larger applications, and to learn also, by means of applications which can scarcely be ignored, the real significance of those principles which are, and always have been, potential of such results. We agree with Dr. Martineau when he says : " I cannot rest contentedly on the past ; I cannot take a step towards the future without its support." Now that we can look back over the course which has been traveled, it is easier to perceive the kind and degree of progress achieved than when we were engaged on the separate topics.

A single principle has for the most part guided the development of thought in the series, and this because it is the principle which is dominating more and more regally the intelligent Christian belief of our time ; a principle which will no longer be confined within limits too narrow to contain it, nor tolerate the company of theories inconsistent with the truth it expresses. Readers cannot fail to have observed the emphasis we have laid on the universality of the gospel. We have assumed Christianity to be the final and supreme revelation of God to man, a revelation intended for the whole human race and destined to supersede all other religions ; and all the way along our inquiry has been concerning the reality of this principle. What is involved in it ? How far does it carry us ? What value and power reside in the

religious knowledge men gain apart from the gospel? How is this universal gospel related to those large numbers of the human family who are entirely ignorant of it, and to the generations that have passed away without knowledge of it? We have been very far from affirming that the universality of the gospel has been only recently recognized, or that only the few accept it. On the contrary, we have taken for granted that no one among so-called evangelical believers for an instant denies it. It is one of those postulates which can be assumed without debate in every discussion concerning the truths of the gospel. We have been asking ourselves, and have been asking our readers, not, Do you believe that Christianity is the supreme and universal revelation of God to men? but, How much do you mean by its universality and absolute supremacy, and can you believe as you do in this respect, and at the same time entertain certain opinions which seem to be excluded by the claims and the scope of Christianity? To believe that besides the name of Jesus there is none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby there can be salvation, to believe that our Lord spoke truly when He said, "No man cometh to the Father but by me," is of necessity to have corresponding opinions concerning man's power to know God without Christ, and concerning God's purpose to give men that knowledge and motive in the absence of which they cannot be saved. It is this enlarging thought of the gospel in its univer-

sality which is bringing embarrassment on the defenders of all theological systems which would confine the gospel within limited and arbitrary boundaries. It is this more generous recognition of the scope of the gospel which, while it inspires a larger hope for the unchristian nations, at the same time animates a great courage in proclaiming among them the religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that only with a great price has this freedom been obtained. Not to mention earlier conflicts, we are scarcely yet out of the sound of warfare concerning the *extent* of the Atonement. It is not necessary to go out of the present century, nor indeed back of the older generation still represented among us, to find ourselves by the side of those who contended earnestly for a universal as against a limited atonement. The greatest service of the New England Theology was in gaining general assent to the universality of atonement. In the ethical field its service was less permanent, though at the time more highly extolled. While it was, perhaps, enough to expect of one generation that it should restore to use an essential principle, yet it must be admitted that the New England Theology failed to apply consistently the truth it had rescued. To this generation the task remained of bringing other facts and opinions into harmony with the principle of universality. Our fathers were concerned to show that universal atonement does not of necessity procure universal

salvation. The difference was marked between sufficiency and efficiency, between atonement and redemption. The great outside world of heathendom being impenetrable and practically unknown, the question had not become pressing, how an atonement could be universal while nine tenths of the human race, through many centuries, had been left in total ignorance concerning it.

Yet, although this universal character of the gospel is now generally recognized, it may be claimed that at the present time conviction of it is deeper because its grounds are better understood. In the former time, besides the quotation of specific texts, it was customary to argue universal atonement from the divinity of Christ. A divine Saviour must be a Saviour sufficient for the redemption of all men. But we also find in the humanity of Christ, with equal reason, the universality of the gospel. As shown in the article on Incarnation, the characteristic of his humanity is that He stands in universal relation to his brethren. He is the universal man, the head of humanity, the Son of man. Also, and this is perhaps the most considerable of recent enlargements in Christian thought, we are finding in the Scriptural teaching of judgment by Christ confirmation of his universal relation to men. We are learning that this means more than that the judgment is divine and therefore cannot mistake, more than that it is sympathetic and therefore will not be severe. Since Christ is to judge the world, we know that the

decisive fact for every man is his relation to Christ. In the supreme day the secrets of men are to be judged by Jesus Christ according to the gospel. Every man's judgment, his κρίσις, is in relation to Him who has authority to execute judgment *because He is the Son of man*. The Redeemer is the judge. Redemption and judgment are correlative. As redemption is the final and supreme revelation to man, no more sacrifice remaining, so the irreversible word of destiny is pronounced only in view of each individual's acceptance or rejection of Christ. Thus, on every side, as the gospel is better understood, fresh confirmation is found of its universality, and all theories of the condition, salvability, and destiny of men must be shaped in conformity with the unbounded power, claim, and promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have, therefore, reaffirmed three important postulates of Christian thought and effort: universal sinfulness, universal atonement, and the indispensableness of faith in Christ.

By the first we mean that man's sinful state is such that he has no power of deliverance from it. This consideration is more important than a determination of the degree of his guilt. How guilty any man is can be known only to God. What judgment will be or should be passed on this or that individual our knowledge is not sufficient to show, although we, of course, believe that it will be a righteous and merciful judgment. The important fact is that all men are so under the control of

sinful propensity and sinful character that they have not in themselves the power of renewal. Although some are less guilty than others, although some will receive a more lenient judgment than others, the facts remain that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that left to themselves there is no hope of salvation.

The universality of atonement has been insisted on both in the treatment of that subject and in the discussion of other doctrines.

The indispensableness of faith in Christ in order that sinful man may be restored to sonship with God has been repeatedly affirmed and continually assumed.

We have accepted these postulates in their length and breadth. We have not reduced but rather have magnified their meaning. We are perfectly aware that a tremendous claim is thus made for Christianity, in respect both to the sufficiency of atonement and to the exclusion of any other way of salvation, but we believe the claim is explicitly supported by Scripture, and inseparable from any just thought of Christianity as a divine revelation.

A natural inference from these premises is that every one will know God as He is revealed in the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. If Christ was given for the whole world, and if no one can be saved except by faith in Christ, we are almost driven to the conclusion that Christ will be made known to every individual of the human race in all the generations past, present, and future, and that

everlasting destiny is determined for every person by his acceptance or rejection of Christ. This conclusion we have therefore gladly and unhesitatingly adopted. We have not, however, expressed as positive an opinion concerning the circumstances and seasons within which Christ will be revealed to those who do not know Him in the earthly life. But we frankly admit that it seems to us probable that those who in this life have no knowledge of Christ will not be denied that knowledge, with its corresponding opportunity, after death. Still, so much that is perplexing remains in respect to God's dealing with the nations of heathendom that we will not be so presumptuous as to press our opinion on any who are not ready to receive it, nor so vain as to suppose that we have found a complete solution of one of the deepest mysteries of God's government of the world. We are content to maintain these three postulates, and to let them establish such conclusions as appear most reasonable in the light of candid and reverent reflection.

Sometimes acceptance of a truth becomes more confident when the alternatives to it are clearly recognized. If this or that alternative must be rejected, the opinion which remains will have more probability. The alternative is to surrender one or more of the three postulates we have mentioned. It may be denied (that man has in himself no power to escape from sin) or (that atonement is universal,) or (that faith in Christ is indispensable to salvation.)

One alternative, then, is the theory that atone-

ment was made only for the elect. God chose some from all eternity unto salvation. Then He sent his Son to redeem them, but not to redeem any others. Atonement was made for only part of the human family. It was sufficient for the purpose. So, besides the elect who have actually known Christ, there are elect infants and elect heathen who in some mysterious way are saved by means of the Atonement. This theory surrenders the second postulate. The Atonement is not universal. It holds that sin is universal, and that faith in Christ is indispensable, but denies that the Atonement is universal. It has the merit of consistency. There is no need to argue the question how Christ could have suffered for the whole world, while yet the vast majority of men die without knowledge of Christ, for it is not admitted that Christ did suffer for the whole world. But its consistency is bought at a terrible price. The conception of God is unscriptural, the doctrine of Christ is unchristian, and that sentiment or consciousness which is the product of the gospel is outraged. That alternative we have not even argued. Such a gospel cannot be preached. Such a God cannot be loved.

Another, and really the only other, alternative is the surrender of both the first and third postulates. By implication it is denied that faith in Christ is indispensable to salvation when it is argued that those who have not the gospel can be saved from their sins notwithstanding. If the light of reason

and conscience is sufficient, then man can release himself from sin without the truth and love of Christ. This theory is argued at length in the chapter on Eschatology. It is enough now to emphasize certain considerations which were urged before, but which seem to be overlooked in current discussions of the subject.

If this theory means that man of himself can come to his normal state of holiness and likeness to God, we have replied that the evidence from facts is meagre and extremely uncertain, and that Scripture repeatedly affirms the contrary. The instances of exceptional virtue usually cited are not sufficiently conclusive to warrant us in abandoning belief in the necessity of faith in Christ. We are not yet ready to admit that there is another name given under the Asiatic heaven whereby the Chinese can be saved, and another way open in Africa whereby a man can come to the Father. God may and does prepare *conditions* in the development of nations, and even of individuals, into which the truth of Christ can come and work with mighty power. The soil is made ready providentially, but the seed is always the word of the kingdom. The truth by which man is justified and sanctified is the truth as it is in Jesus, who is the wisdom of God and the power of God to every one that believeth.

But were there not pious Jews before the time of Christ who were saved, and who at death entered immediately into blessedness? Whatever may become of our theory, we can answer this question

only in the affirmative. How, then, does it appear that knowledge of Christ is indispensable to salvation? And if they were saved by living up to the light they had, why may not conscientious even if more ignorant heathen also be saved? To these questions we must reply, as we replied before, that the knowledge of God granted to the Jews was different in kind from the knowledge attainable by others, and that we therefore are not justified in arguing from the Jews to the Gentiles. The Jews occupied an exceptional position. They were the recipients of a special revelation from God. They were vouchsafed a knowledge of God along lines which led on to the complete revelation in Christ. They knew the righteousness and compassion of God. Above all, they had learned that God seeks man in pity and forgiveness for his redemption. With Abraham in some dim but real vision they saw the day of Christ. This would prove that it is not indispensable to salvation that one should know Christ in the actual circumstances of his earthly work. But there was a real foreshadowing of Christ such as was not opened to the Gentile nations. That revelation, even now, is found to have been so intimately related to the complete revelation in Christ that we bind up the record of it with the gospel to make our Bible in its indissoluble organic unity. It may also be repeated that the belief has always been cherished that devout Jews were brought after death to their full salvation through the knowledge of Christ. But the Jews

present no real exception to our principle, for salvation was made known to them through the atoning and redeeming love of God, and Judaism is inseparable from Christianity. But when we are asked to go farther, to argue from the Jews to the heathen, from the Psalms to the Vedas, from the Prophets to the books of Confucius, to believe that the light of reason and conscience without any revelation whatever differs not in kind but in degree only from Christianity, we confess ourselves unable to follow. When, in order to save the postulate of faith in Christ (for there evidently is no other reason, since observed facts would never suggest it), when it is soberly argued that the comparatively good heathen are saved by their faith in Christ, although they never heard of Him, that Christ is essentially known when He is not known at all, we really must be excused from making so fanciful discriminations. It is intelligible that those who do not know Christ during the earthly life will be lost, for want of that knowledge ; although we cannot bring ourselves so to believe. It is intelligible that those who do not know Christ during the earthly life may yet live so righteously that they will have a place in the kingdom of the redeemed at last ; although such persons are confessedly seldom found, and when they are supposed to be found it is believed that they ultimately know God in Christ, and thus only are redeemed from their sin. It is intelligible, and we think probable, that those who do not know Christ during the earthly

life will know Him in the life beyond. The extension of time seems necessary to the absolute and universal religion. But it is in our opinion neither intelligible nor probable that men are saved by a Christ of whom they know nothing whatever. This theory we can best characterize still as salvation by magic. We have pondered it well, and think it leaves Paul's question still unanswered: "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" We are slow to conclude that men are saved from their sins and restored to sonship with God without knowing Christ and believing in Him. We are not convinced that character becomes fixed in righteousness and likeness to God apart from the gospel. Some conscientiousness there may be, some moral amendment, some conformity to the light given. In such cases men are not hopelessly condemned, for they are *capable* of salvation. But are they redeemed from sin? Are they walking in newness of life? Have they the purity and liberty of the children of God? Would there not be radical changes if Christ were known and received? Let us remember that the question is not concerning the blameworthiness of those who have been obedient to the light they have. The question is whether any besides those who receive Christ have power to become the sons of God, whether they can be saved in any sufficient meaning of salvation unless either before death, or at death, or after death, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines upon them in the face of Jesus Christ.

Not only do we believe that character does not become permanently crystallized into holiness by the aid of reason and conscience alone, even if such light (in some sense unintelligible to us) is equivalent to Christianity, but we also believe that, in the vast majority of cases, character does not become permanently crystallized into wickedness, so that salvation through Christ becomes impossible. If the heathen are still capable of salvation through Christ, can we believe that because an inert church fails to preach Christ to them during their earthly life they will therefore never have the opportunity of knowing Him? It is sometimes said that if Socrates had known of Christ he would have believed in Him, and it is therefore supposed that after death he did know Christ. That is, Socrates at death was still *capable* of salvation through Christ. Neither more nor less than this is meant. But who shall draw the line between those heathen who are and those who are not capable of salvation? Can one walk up and down in heathendom, and, as he proceeds, point to this one, and that one, and another, who have become incapable of repentance and renewal? Will one stand on the threshold of his little church and turn away certain persons because he clearly perceives that even the gospel of Jesus Christ is powerless to save them? Certainly an African, a Japanese, an Australasian, sinks into deep debasement. The corruption seems incurable. But would any missionary board send out a preacher who intends to labor only for those who show some

remaining signs of moral health? Whatever may be the fact, we certainly have not a knowledge of men sufficient to warrant us in affirming that any one to whom Christ has not been made known is already incapable of salvation. We do not dare to affirm as much of any individual who has apparently become fixed in wickedness and unbelief under the full blaze of the light of the gospel. The mighty working of the Holy Spirit in corrupt hearts has so often reversed our judgment that we have learned to despair of none. Much less, then, is it permissible to conclude that any heathen, however wicked he may be, but who has not heard of Christ, is hopelessly lost. And if such a one goes out of the world, as millions do, without knowledge of Christ, who shall dare to say, in the absence of any word of Scripture to that effect, that the clear light and the mighty motive of the gospel will be withheld forever?

It seems to be thought by some that our principal contention has been to show that no one can be *saved* without knowledge of Christ, and that if a few exceptions could be discovered our principle would be overthrown. But we have been endeavoring to show that no one can be *lost* without having had knowledge of Christ. The Jews and the pious heathen have been cited to prove that salvation is possible without knowledge of the historic Christ, and consequently it has been concluded that our principle breaks down. But even if we should have to admit that some abatement must be made from

a strict interpretation of our principle so as to make room for these exceptions, we should still press the main question. The real difficulty is that millions of men die, not only without knowledge of the gospel, but also without showing signs of moral renewal, and we ask, Are all these multitudes, through so many generations, hopelessly lost? Opinions may differ about the salvation of the few exceptionally virtuous heathen. But opinions cannot differ about the masses of heathendom who die in their sins. Must we, can we, believe that they are eternally damned? Is it possible that God will never bring to them the light and motive of the gospel of Jesus Christ? We think, indeed, as we have repeatedly argued, that salvation in any proper sense of the term is realized only by faith in Christ, that conscientious heathen have only a capacity more or less for redemption. Neither have we at any point so narrowly interpreted Christianity as to limit knowledge of Christ to acquaintance with the facts of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. We have meant knowledge of God's atoning and redeeming love, which the Jews received dimly without knowing the historic Christ; which, we believe, is given after death to those who, seeing Him for the first time, see Him as He is, perhaps without the intervention of biography and history, but which, we think, is not in any intelligible sense given to the heathen nations before death. Therefore, when it is asked, Are not some persons saved without knowledge of Christ? we answer, Possibly; although, ex-

cept the Jews, to whom a revelation was made, redeemed persons outside Christendom are admitted to be exceedingly few. But when all has been conceded on that side that can possibly be claimed, the real difficulty remains as grave and persistent as before. Are multitudes of men lost without knowledge of God's atoning and redeeming love in Jesus Christ? Can they be finally and absolutely condemned if they have known nothing of God's final and absolute revelation of himself to mankind? Can any one be hopelessly lost who has not so much as heard of Him who tasted death for every man? We, therefore, contend that universal judgment by Christ means that every man is to be judged by his relation to Christ; that no one will be forever condemned unless he has rejected the salvation which is in Jesus Christ.

It should, perhaps, be explicitly stated, in order to prevent misapprehension, that our opinion that the heathen after death will obtain knowledge of Christ does not mean that their probation continues on and on till the day of judgment, while the probation of others is limited to this life. That knowledge of Christ which is decisive may come immediately after death, so that probation speedily comes to an end. Our contention is that destiny is determined by one's relation to Christ, and that therefore to every one Christ, sooner or later, will be made known. The judgment day is the end of probation for the race as a whole. Then every land, every nation, every generation, will have

known Christ as Redeemer. But the limit of probation for countless individuals will long since have been passed, for many who did not have the gospel in the earthly life, as well as for the many who did have it in the earthly life. The revelation given in the disembodied state may be so luminous that the actual time will scarcely be appreciable between the moment of death and the moment when Christ is decisively accepted or rejected. And yet, with some, we can easily imagine that protracted processes of education and discipline may be necessary to make them ripe for decision. We do not argue, then, for a second probation, nor for a probation indefinitely prolonged, but for a Christian probation, sometime and somewhere, and for a Christian judgment under which all the individuals of all the nations, and all the generations, will receive the allotments of eternal destiny.

It is instructive to observe that nearly all who for various reasons cannot believe that the heathen may have knowledge of Christ after death are confessing their inability to reach any definite conclusion whatever. A common answer to questions concerning the destiny of the heathen is, We do not know. This view is sometimes called Christian agnosticism. Besides our own, we believe this to be the only tenable position. The manifest inconsistency of the theories we have criticised is driving them from the field. Christians are at least becoming certain that there are some opinions they cannot hold. One candid editor says that no Scrip-

ture denounces endless woe on heathen who have never heard of Christ, and that, therefore, we cannot be required to believe that their doom is hopeless; that when the few sporadic instances of "pious heathen" are pointed to for relief they are found to be inadequate to solve the tremendous problem. He therefore relegates the whole matter to infinite wisdom and justice and love. He does not believe that the heathen are lost, nor that the few moral, even if essentially Christian, heathen relieve the immense difficulty, and therefore he is a Christian agnostic, committing the world in triumphant faith and hope to the Infinite Father. He explicitly declares that we can neither see nor affirm what becomes of the heathen hereafter. To this conclusion a majority of Christians have probably come. It certainly shows great progress that this position is quite generally held. Much is gained when untenable theories are intelligently abandoned. It is an important discovery as well as admission that the Bible nowhere teaches that heathen who have never heard the gospel are hopelessly lost. Therefore, when it is said that the Scripture does not teach that the heathen have opportunity of salvation after death, we can at least reply that it does not preclude that hope, for it nowhere teaches that the heathen are lost, and that their opportunity is limited to this life. But we have no contention with the agnostic, and we think he has no reason to have contention with us. We are agreed in rejecting certain outworn and un-

christian theories. He does not deny that God's way *may* be to give knowledge of Christ after death, only he is not at present convinced. He will admit that such a method is not unworthy of God nor unreasonable in itself. When ignorance is confessed under the saying that God will do what is right, we, of course, agree. No one believes that God will do what is wrong. Our conviction, however, is that the revelation of God in Christ enables us to understand in certain respects what is right for God to do or not to do. We believe it is right for God to judge the world by Jesus Christ, for we therefore believe that the judgment of men is determined by their relation to Him who has already been made known to them as Saviour. Agnosticism on this subject is likely to be temporary. It is a resting-place where one stands who has cut loose from unchristian theories. Search of the Scriptures and profounder study of Christianity will be likely to carry him on to the principle we have so often enunciated and emphasized. We think agnosticism can properly remain only concerning the mode in which that principle will be applied to men in the great variety of their moral conditions.

We have dwelt on the relation of the heathen world to the gospel longer than might seem necessary. The reason is that the gravest objection to the universality and absoluteness of Christianity is at this very point. The Scriptural representations of the gospel, and its intrinsic character,

show it to be universal; yet, as matter of fact, only a small fraction of the human race in the long succession of the ages has even heard of Jesus Christ. How, then, it may fairly be asked, can it be considered the universal religion? The acute Strauss urges the force of this objection. He declares that, since so large a portion of mankind know nothing of Christianity, it cannot be necessary to salvation, because not the universal religion; and that, if certain virtuous heathen are saved, then the gospel is proved not to be the universal religion, because not necessary to salvation.¹ The only reply is that until the gospel does fill the whole earth knowledge of it must be given after death to those who are deprived of its blessings before death.

We need not linger to review the several articles of our series in the light of the absoluteness of Christianity. The Incarnation shows Christ the universal man vitally related to the whole human race. The Atonement shows Christ suffering with the race and for the race, and thereby giving mankind a power it could not otherwise have. The Holy Spirit uses as highest and final motive for every man the truth as it is in Jesus. Man can be brought to God only through Christ the Saviour of the world. The Bible is the supreme authority for man, because it embodies the gospel of the only begotten Son of God.

We have also endeavored to show that there can

¹ *Christliche Glaubenslehre*, i. pp. 268-274.

be no stronger motive to missions than a clear recognition that the gospel is absolute and universal. If one believes that the heathen are doomed, and that all of them who die without hearing of Christ are forever lost, he has, indeed, an urgent motive to send or carry the gospel to them. But a more inspiring motive is found in loyalty to Christ, in obedience to his last command, in laboring with Him for the extension of his kingdom, in gaining for Him those who are his own and for whom He died. At the recent great missionary meeting in Boston it was noticeable that the motive urged was the universality of Christianity, the relation of Christ to the race; and that scarcely a word was uttered concerning the doom of the heathen. Whatever may have been believed by the majority of the assembly as to the fate of the heathen, it was evidently felt that the influential motive is the universality of Christ's redemption and kingdom, and the need all men have of entering into that kingdom. But we may not make inquisition into motives, nor insist that others shall be impelled by the identical motive which urges us on. Neither of these great motives is a selfish motive. Love for men is in them both. Paul was not half as careful as those would be now who can discover but one motive for preaching the gospel. He knew that some preached from very low motives, but he would not hinder them. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will. . . . What then? only that in every

way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." We may not discourage those who preach Christ because they believe that the heathen not having the gospel in this life are hopelessly lost. Neither may they discourage those who go forth with enthusiasm to proclaim Christ who is the only Redeemer and rightful King of men, and whose kingdom is a universal and an everlasting kingdom.

Both in respect to our thinking and our toil we may share the expectation of the great apostle who was both theologian and missionary, when he said, "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

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